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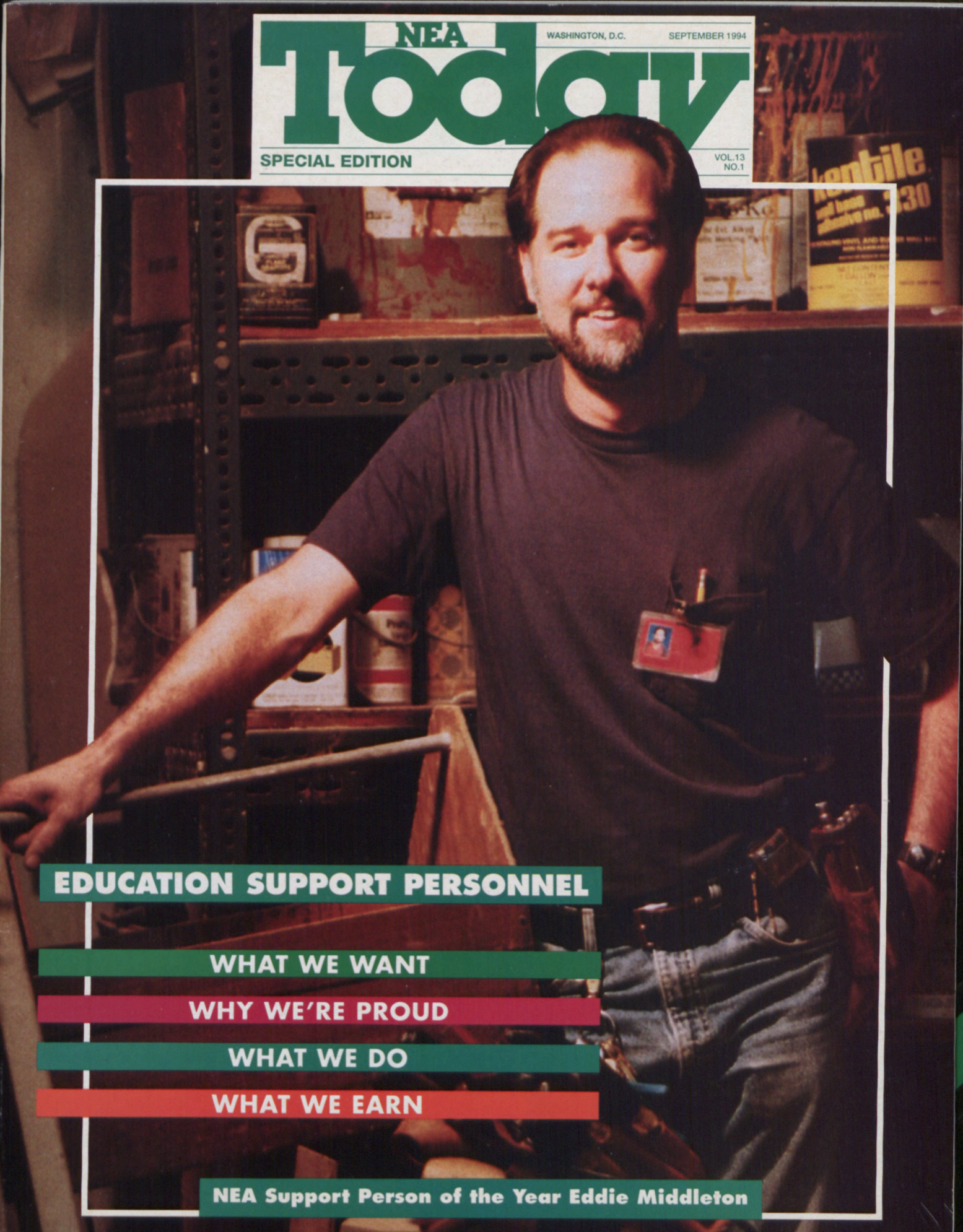


EDUCATION SUPPORT PERSONNEL

WHAT WE WANT

WHY WE'RE PROUD

WHAT WE DO

WHAT WE EARN

NEA Support Person of the Year Eddie Middleton

EDITOR'S NOTE

A year ago . . .

. . . Education support employees in Kentucky, Florida, and New Mexico could be fired for any reason — or no reason at all. No more.

. . . Support employees in Mississippi and Idaho could work full-time without access to affordable health insurance. No more.

. . . Support employees in schools from Maine to Washington could be pushed aside when it came time to improve education. No more.

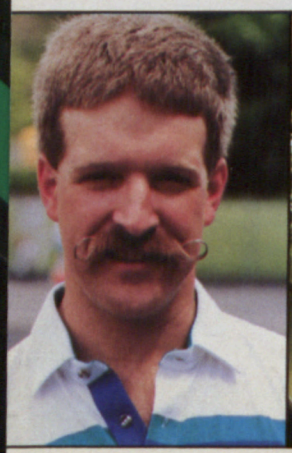
What brought about all these changes? Hard work by NEA members who began saying "no more"—and prevailed.

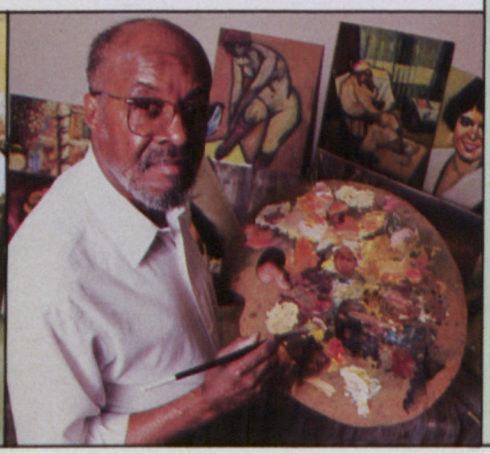
In the pages ahead, you'll read about these members. You'll read about colleagues like New York paraprofessional Sandi Washington, who said, "No more school quality review teams without us." Missouri secretary Theresa Johnston, who said, "No more telling us what kind of training we want." And Ohio cafeteria worker Linda Nawrocki, who said, "No more contracting out our jobs."

In these pages, you'll learn that, as a member of NEA, the nation's largest union and largest education organization, you have the power—and the people behind you—to say "no more," too. You have the power to make a difference.

Who knows? Maybe next year you'll find your story in these pages!

Stefanie Weiss, editor





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Recycled Paper

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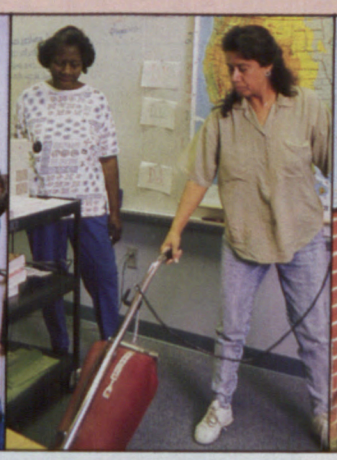
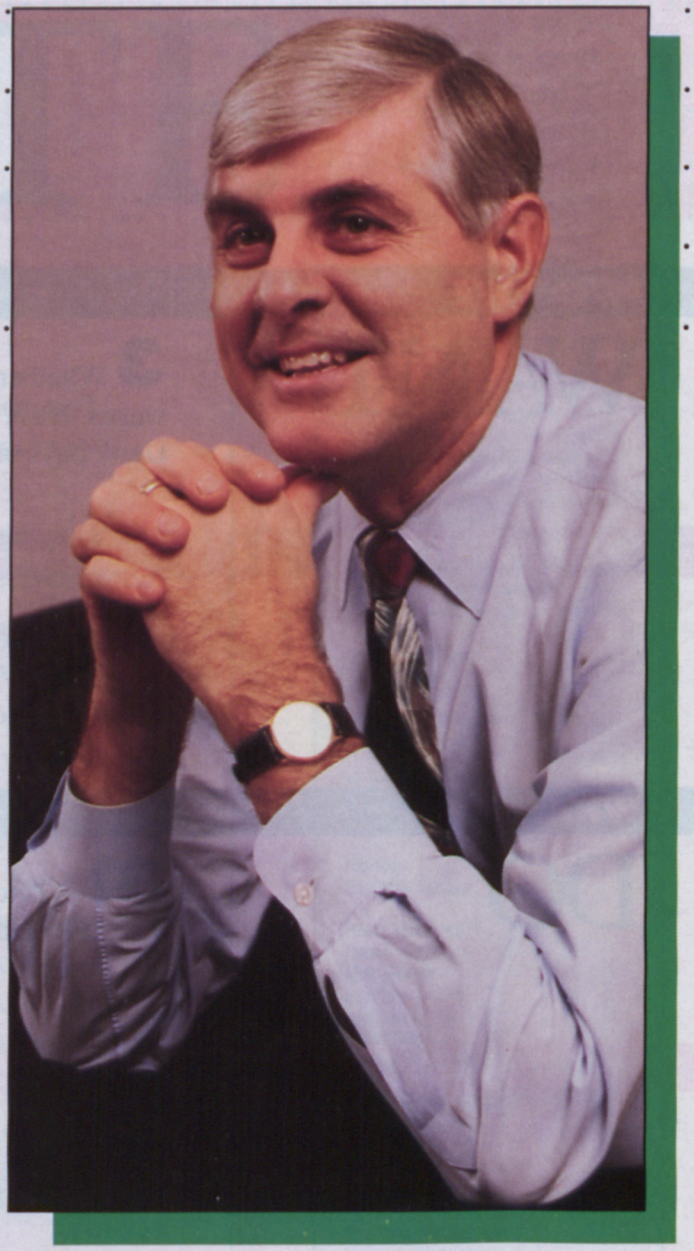


PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



All members of our Association's ESP family have learned, often through painful experience, what it's like to fight for social and economic justice.

Whether the issue is pay inequity, gender or race discrimination, unfair labor practices, or the destructive practice of contracting out, you've known the heat of battle. You could have wilted. Instead, adversity strengthened you.

Still, many of you remain victims of policies and practices that deny you the dignity, respect, and compensation you deserve. This is a disservice to you. But it's also a disservice to America's young people. When you're victimized, they're victimized, too. For you are—as much as any Association member—teachers of the children who will determine our destiny.

That's why we must persevere in the struggle for workplace justice. Only then will we be able to devote ourselves fully to the challenge of creating the conditions that will enable America's children to know the joy of learning.

I urge you, as I have so many times in the past, to move aggressively to assert your right to first-class citizenship within the education community.

If that means rocking the boat, rock away. If that means jolting the status quo, make the jolt a powerful one. And be assured that 2.2 million NEA colleagues will be with you, prepared to join the fray.

NEA President

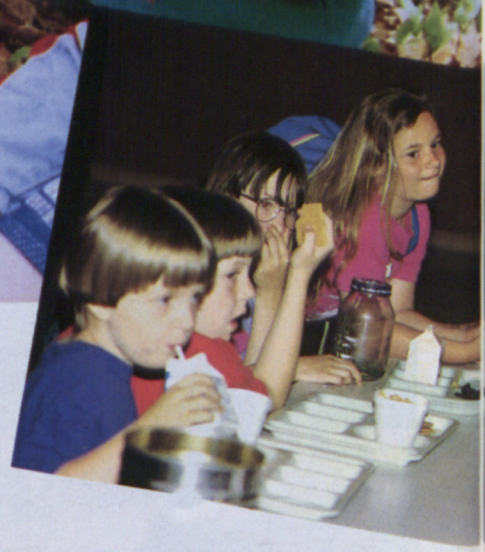
Keith Geiger

WHAT WE WANT

Greg Jenson

How did Mississippi cafeteria workers like Delree Tisdale get paid health insurance? Read on.

Gordon Chibroski



On a walk in their new wildlife habitat, Maine bus driver Marilyn Gryskwicz and a group of students find an old stump covered with moss. The students' mission: to grow moss on the outside of clay pots. The secret ingredient: plain yogurt.

Leading The Way

Who says school support staff can't get involved in restructuring efforts? Even more important, who says support staff can't lead school improvement projects?

No one who's met a certain bus driver in Maine, custodian in Ohio, and paraprofessional in Oregon. These three NEA members are all leaders in the education reform movement.

Bus driver Marilyn Gryskwicz is something of a local hero in Gorham, **Maine**. Thanks to her imagination and drive, the White Rock School boasts a new wildlife habitat, complete with nature trail, animal feeding stations, and interdisciplinary curriculum.

Gryskwicz, president of the Gorham Educational Support Association, came up with the idea herself, then made it happen.

"I believe that children can learn so much more by taking a look at their own environment," she explains. "That's why this project was so important to me."

Now, the outdoor enthusiast says, "children can observe wildlife, plant trees, and go on nature walks—learning all the way. Creating a curriculum to support it made it even more exciting."

Gryskwicz coordinated a collaborative effort involving GESA, the Gorham Teachers Association, and several administrators and community members. The project was recently awarded a $4,000 grant by NEA's National Foundation for the Improvement of Education.

"I hope this tells others that you can make things happen if you want to," says Gryskwicz. "I wouldn't take no for an answer, and this project shows it."

➤ In Lancaster, **Ohio,** custodian Carl Wilmot heads the site-based decision making council at Cedar Heights Elementary School. Elected by the school's teachers and support staff, Wilmot oversees efforts that range from purchasing playground equipment to determining curriculum materials.

"It's been a terrific learning process for everyone," Wilmot says. "We now understand each other's jobs and coordinate our decisions."

This year, the council took on its biggest task: selecting a new principal. "That showed the district administra-

Tips on Taking Part

How can you get involved in school reform efforts? A few tips from Michigan UniServ Director Robin Langley:

➤ Get your local Association involved in any reform discussion. Education reform can't succeed without the participation of all staff.

➤ Help your colleagues overcome any fears they may have. Encourage coworkers to be a part of every committee, every fact-finding group, every council.

➤ Ask your administrators for appropriate classes and training opportunities.

➤ Let everyone know that when school support staff are involved, good things happen.

Mike Munden

Ohio custodian Carl Wilmot takes a break to find out what students think.

tion trusted us to make the right choice," Wilmot says.

"Very little goes on here without us, and that means all of us."

➤ In Hillsboro, **Oregon,** NEA member Frances Pingel has launched a project called Language: A Two-Way Street to fight the area's growing dropout rate among Hispanic students.

The program offers the Hispanic students at Groner Elementary School, most of them from migrant families, bilingual tutoring in individual or small group lessons through the Migrant Education Program.

But the bilingual education goes both ways. English-speaking students are also learning Spanish through games, songs, and assignments led by the Hispanic students and parents.

Largely because of Pingel's efforts, Language: A Two-Way Street won a $7,500 "Just Do It" Teachers' grant from NIKE, Inc. and NEA's National Foundation for the Improvement of Education.

Reform Includes You

Robin Langley, UniServ director in East Grand Rapids, Michigan, is known for her efforts to ensure ESP involvement in education reform.

Why is it so important for ESP members to get involved in ed reform?

Because support staff are as critical to school improvement as teachers and administrators. Even more important, unlike many teachers, school support staff live in the community surrounding the school. They have knowledge that others don't have—knowledge about the children, the community, the parents. That's why they have to be able to contribute as equal stakeholders in the schools.

How should ESP get involved?

ESP members need to insert themselves into the process from the very beginning of school reform efforts. They can't let themselves get shut out. Sometimes that will mean meeting with the teachers to talk about integrating support employees into the process. But make it happen. Don't be intimidated.

What do you say to those who resist support staff involvement, saying that curriculum issues don't apply to them?

I tell them some support employees might not have the ability or knowledge on curriculum issues in the beginning, but they can extend their learning and understanding of the issues and the work.

They'll also be able to give invaluable input based on their knowledge of the community, and practical suggestions based on their knowledge of the school as a whole. Our members are now involved in every aspect of school life, and that's the way it should be.

Then there's something else, even more important, that I tell ESP members.

What's that?

That what often keeps ESP members out of ed reform is a feeling that others won't view them as professionals and won't think they belong on reform committees. I say people will only treat you as a second-class citizen if you let them. Show them you have the right to be there as decisions are made. Show them you're not going to say, "I'm just a secretary, cafeteria worker, or custodian" any longer.

Four Weddings . . .

Support workers won major job security victories in state legislatures this year—achieving due process rights in Florida, Kentucky, and New Mexico, and repealing a law in Indiana that threatened bus drivers' jobs.

In Florida, the Orange County ESP Association (OESPA) took the lead in drafting and lobbying for a new due process law.

"If the employees in the state roads department can have due process," OESPA President Ruby Strickland asked, "why can't public school employees?"

Support employees asked the same question in Kentucky and New Mexico and got the same answer. In all three states, employees can now be terminated only for just cause, with the requirement of notice and the right to appeal.

With due process comes the expectation—if not the guarantee—of continu-

A pro-subcontracting Indiana legislator said "hell would freeze over" before the bus bidding law was repealed. Apparently it did. The event was noted at ISTA's celebration.

Orlando, Florida's leading "lobbyists" include ESP members (left to right) Lee Littlefield, David Young, Ruby Strickland, Pearl Eldridge, Frank Spaulding, Reginald Vinson, Mary Brillante, and Bill Humphreys.

Tom Burton

ing employment from year to year.

"I've had my last letter from the district saying, 'You have been reappointed for one year, but you have no expectation of employment beyond that,'" laughs Strickland, an 18-year veteran parapro with Orange County.

The Indiana repealer law (H.B. 1033) undid last-minute language inserted in the 1993 budget bill requiring school districts to get annual bids from private school bus contractors.

The language went down in a sea of postcards distributed by members of the Indiana State Teachers Association to allies across the state—90,000 cards came back to ISTA headquarters.

That pattern—of intensive ESP lobbying—was repeated in the due process victories as well.

"We burned up the phone wires," says Kentucky ESP Association President Helen Cottongim.

But the four victories may have also benefited from a small shift in official thinking about school employees.

In both Kentucky and Florida, for example, the legislatures received testimony or survey results revealing a jumble of guidelines for dealing with support staff personnel matters, plus evidence of unfair staff terminations.

"The policy-makers were shocked at the amateurishness of it all," says KESPA's Cottongim.

"We also told the legislators that you can't have education reform if you leave out 43 percent—the ESP portion—of school employees," she adds. "And they began to understand that."

To the Source

For a copy of the Florida, Kentucky, or New Mexico ESP due process bill, send a 29-cent SASE to the appropriate staffer: Marshall Ogletree, FTP-NEA, 213 S. Adams St., Tallahassee, FL 32301; Roderick Brown, Kentucky EA, 401 Capitol Ave., Frankfort, KY 40601; Jay Miller, NEA-New Mexico, 130 S. Capitol, Santa Fe, NM 87504.

. . . and a Funeral

The biggest legislative defeat of the year for NEA members took place in Michigan. Michigan Education Association Secretary-Treasurer Steve Cook, a paraprofessional from Lansing, explains its impact.

MEA

How does the anti-union bill that was signed into law in May affect support employees?

The law, which goes into effect in April 1995, hurts support workers in the same way it hurts all members of Michigan public employee unions: it redefines what a strike is.

Employees who don't "fully, faithfully, and properly perform their duties" will be considered to be on strike. What if an employee objects to a board policy and goes public about it? Is that being unfaithful? And therefore on strike?

Are there penalties for strikes?

Are there! An employee found to be on strike is fined a day's pay; the Association, $5,000 a day—even if the member is acting on his or her own. And there's no appeal.

Worse, although we'll be fined an amount equal to a day's pay, we'll still be required to work all the days as scheduled by the employer. In other words, if we're deemed to be on strike three days but still work 180 days, we'll have to forfeit three days' pay even though we will have actually worked those days.

There are serious First Amendment and unfair labor practice issues here.

What does the law say about privatization?

Districts have the right to privatize, but we'll no longer have the right to discuss or bargain with them over the impact on employees.

What's the motivation here?

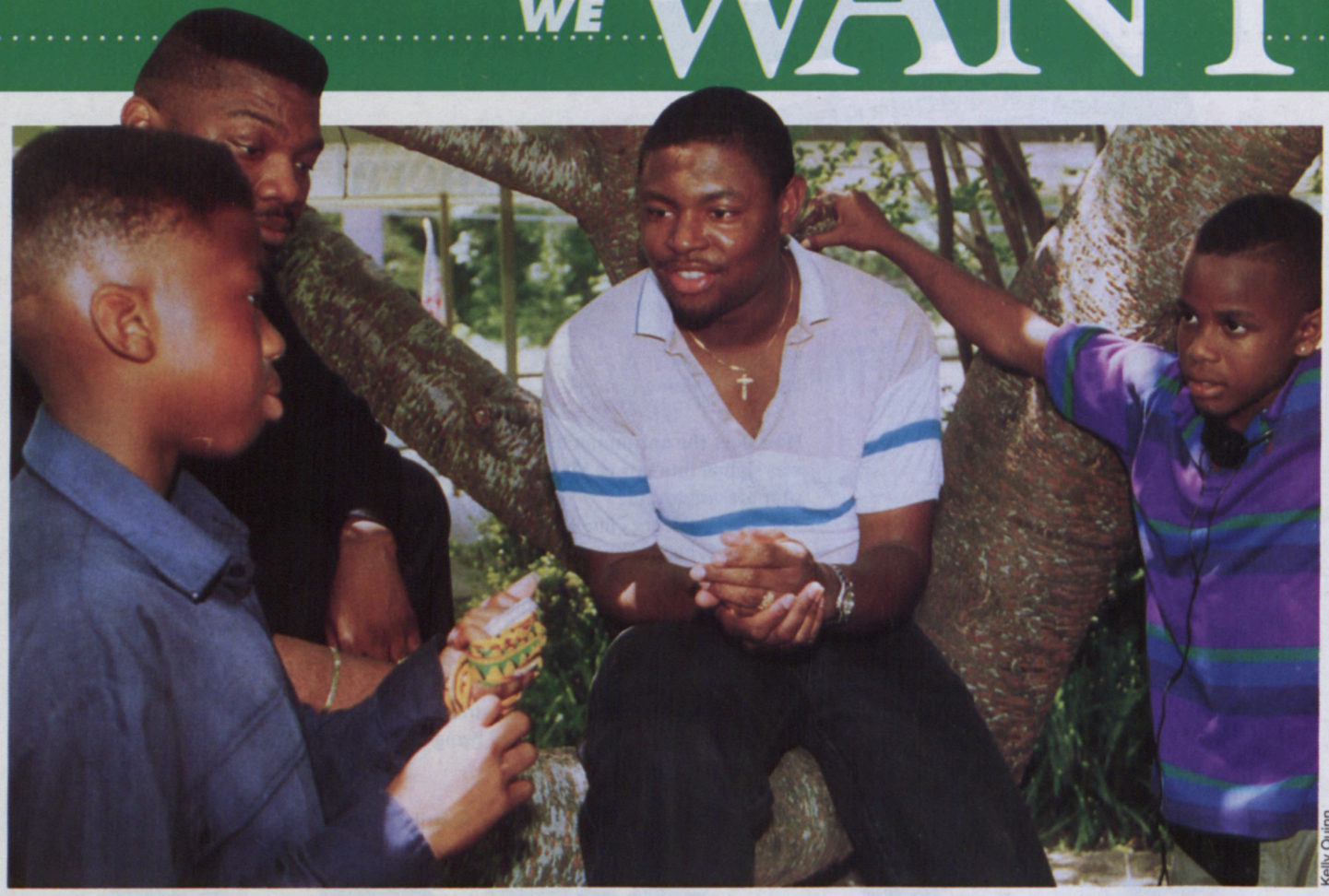
It's clearly ideological. The law has nothing in it—as past privatization bills have had—about lowest bidder, performance review, oversight. They're not trying to save money, they're fulfilling a vision.

Why did this happen in such a strong union state?

There's a parallel to the situation in New Jersey: a Democratic governor falls out of favor with Association members, who decide to take a look at the Republican. What happens is that liberals hold back and hard-right, anti-government Republicans take power.

What are you going to do?

Seek resolution at the polls. First, on election day in November, the governor, all state Senate and House members—they're all up for reelection. We'll work really hard to elect friends of education to both houses of the state legislature. Then we'll try to get this blatantly unfair law repealed.



Kelly Quinn

What It Takes To Make a School Safe

As violence becomes commonplace at schools around the country, school staffs are pulling out all the stops to keep children safe.

High-tech equipment, hand-holding discipline, and teaching kids and their families about non-violent conflict resolution are increasingly part of a safe school strategy.

At Cloverdale Elementary School in Little Rock, **Arkansas,** supervision aide Calvin Langston serves as a mentor in the school's Straight Talk program. Once a month, dozens of third to sixth grade boys gather to talk with mentors about things like trouble at home or why they've been fighting in school.

How have the kids responded? "For some, it takes a little time," says Langston, a member of the Little Rock Classroom Teachers Association. Some always will have that wall up. You have to sit down and let them know you're there for them."

Supportive, yes, but tough, too. Some kids think that because of their close relationship with Langston, they can actually get away with more. "I tell them I'll be there," says Langston, "but if you get in trouble, you will be dealt with."

For Langston, the important victories come quietly. One fifth grader was in constant trouble. Once in Straight Talk, Langston built a rapport with him, meeting him after class or walking with him. "He began to calm down," says Langston. "He doesn't do a lot of fighting anymore."

➤ In Union, **Oklahoma,** school safety is a spotlight issue.

Night custodians for the Union Public Schools were concerned about the dark corners and poorly lit parking lots on campuses as incidents of vandalized cars and unauthorized people on campus began to rise.

Supervision aide Calvin Langston (center) takes time out to talk with students Quinton Forney (left), Tomas Brewer (right), and principal Frederick Fields.

"But it wasn't just our issue," notes Brian Peck, president of the Union Support Personnel Association. The custodians' concerns led to the formation of a Security Task Force that included support members, teachers, administrators, and parents.

New motion lights around dumpsters and brighter lights in parking lots have added a greater degree of safety for employees and students alike. Next on the list: vehicle registration and increased security staffing.

➤ The Broward **(Florida)** NEA UniServ Paraprofessional Association is developing alternatives to the tradi-

tional suspension process for four elementary and four middle schools.

One facet of the program: a child who is suspended must sign a contract agreeing to attend mediation training on non-violent resolutions to conflict. Parents too must sign this contract and participate.

Working with teachers and NEA's Center for the Revitalization of Urban Education, the Association will kick off its program—its latest bid in the battle for safe schools—this year.

Environmental Safety Zone

School buildings can pose environmental threats to the health of students and staff. What should you aim for in your struggle to keep your school safe?

➤ Heating, ventilation, and air conditioning systems that allow for a fresh air supply and are cleaned regularly.

➤ Pest control that works yet is non-toxic to humans. In Texas, a method called "integrated pest management" aims to reduce pests to tolerable levels, not eradicate them, in exchange for using the least toxic method available.

➤ High-quality cleaning products, such as floor waxes, that keep things clean longer and reduce the chemicals humans are exposed to.

➤ Natural lighting, or at least carefully designed whole-room light installation, to ensure that there's proper light not only to read, but to stay alert.

For more information on these and other topics like "Nutrition, Learning, and the Cafeteria," check out *The Healthy School Handbook: Conquering the Sick Building Syndrome and Other Environmental Hazards In and Around Your School* from the NEA Professional Library, available now at the special ESP prepublication price of $15.95.

To order, call toll free 800/229-4200 or write NEA Professional Library, P.O. Box 509, West Haven, CT 06516. Use stock no. 1863-X-10-C8.

Lead and Radon

NEA Today *asked Phil Barnett, counsel to the U.S. House of Representatives' Subcommittee on Health and the Environment, for some answers on the dangers of lead and radon.*

What are the biggest dangers lead and radon pose to schools?

The Centers for Disease Control and the EPA have said lead is the number one environmental health hazard for kids, particularly for kids six years and under. Low levels of lead exposure can impair kids' mental development. Researchers say one out of six children may have elevated levels of lead in their blood.

Radon is the second leading cause of lung cancer. The EPA did a survey that showed one out of five schools had at least one classroom with elevated levels of radon.

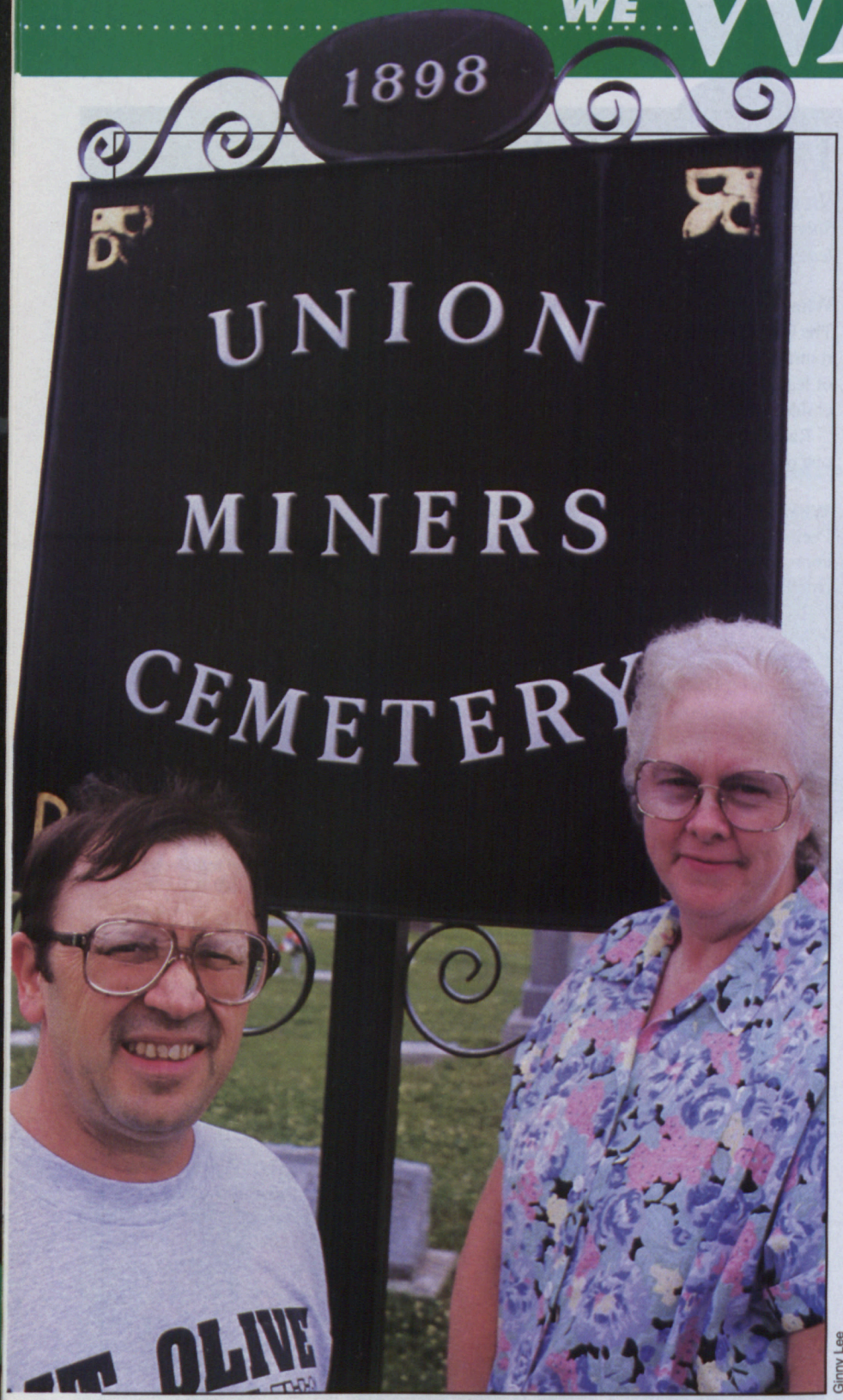
Where are lead and radon commonly found?

Peeling lead paint is often found around windows and old radiators. Lead paint dust is commonly found in buildings during renovations. Radon is in the ground. You can't smell it, you can't see it, you can't taste it. You have to test for it.

What is happening in the legislature to address these issues?

Unfortunately, very little federal help is available now. There is pending legislation—that NEA supports—to provide funds for both school radon and lead testing, but the outlook for enactment this year is unlikely. NEA members should urge their members of Congress to support legislation requiring schools to conduct tests for these hazards and help pay for testing and clean-up.

For more information about lead contamination, call the EPA's national hotline, 1-800-LEAD-FYI. For more on radon, call your state's radon center.



Ginny Lee

The spirit of great union organizer Mother Jones was with Illinois teacher Ron Ryan and cafeteria supervisor Ellen Scheller when their two local Associations joined forces to fight layoffs. Mother Jones was buried in the Union Miners Cemetery in 1930.

Mother Jones Would Have Been Proud

In fact, the famed turn-of-the-century union activist would have marveled at the unity displayed between teachers and support workers in Mt. Olive, Illinois, the small mining town where Jones is buried.

Faced with cuts that threatened at least 14 jobs, the two groups worked together to rally community support. In one weekend, teachers and support workers handed out as many fliers as there are people in the small town.

"It was a community project," explains cafeteria supervisor and Mt. Olive Education Support Personnel Association President Ellen Scheller. "We knew the people of Mt. Olive would stand by their schools."

To discuss how and where cuts would be made, support workers—affiliated with NEA for just a year—joined teachers at the bargaining table.

The result: A custodian threatened with layoff was kept on part-time. A teaching position was restored. Cuts in transportation and supply costs for many of the school's sports were reinstated. And the board agreed to restore academic programs that had been cut if and when state funding increased.

Next time the school district faces a budget crunch, Association leaders say they'll push the district to go to the community sooner.

"We knew they had to cut the debt caused by school renovations," says Carol Rimar, the unions' chief negotiator and a fourth grade teacher. "But they didn't have to do it the way they did. It hurt the kids most of all."

Around the country:

➤ Support workers and teachers joined forces to block a 26-year incumbent from getting re-elected to the Hazelwood, **Missouri** school board.

The long-time board member "suddenly went sour on us," says bus driver

Staff Unity

Diane Franklin, who helped organize the opposition. "He tried to discredit the whole school district."

The major issue was a new energy-saving program the district implemented. The board member opposed the move, saying it was too expensive. But Franklin said the new system represented a long-term cost savings—money that could be used to improve salaries and instructional programs.

The long-term view prevailed, thanks to the joint work of the two Missouri-NEA and NEA affiliates. On election day, voters ousted the veteran and put a friend of education in his place. "It was an important victory for ESP and teachers working together," Franklin says.

➤ For the first time, a combined group of teachers and support staff in Tucson, **Arizona** simultaneously reached agreement with their district.

The agreement gave food service workers and bilingual teacher assistants full benefits—health insurance, paid holidays, and personal leave—regardless of number of hours worked.

Prior to the agreement, benefits for support staff were given only to those who worked at least four hours a day.

➤ When the Missoula, **Montana** community decided to unify their elementary and public high school districts, support workers decided it was time to do some unifying of their own. In May, five sectors of support workers combined to form the Missoula Classified Employees Association.

Sticking Together

A few tips for building unity from NEA staff member Roxanne Dove:

➤ Make sure both teachers and support employees are represented on school improvement teams.

➤ Jointly coordinate bargaining strategies.

➤ Establish a joint "safe building" committee.

➤ Work together on local, state, and national elections.

➤ Offer a joint scholarship to a senior who's planning a career in education.

➤ Believe that the ultimate goal is a powerful, integrated, and united Association.

Para for President

When teachers and support workers first get together, who typically takes charge? Not so fast. In Montgomery, Texas, computer aide Rita Jefferson is the exception to the rule. She's just been elected president of the 50-member Montgomery Education Association, made up of equal parts paras and teachers.

Sam Pierson

Computer aide and Association President Rita Jefferson helps eighth graders James Wilcox and Megan Fournier.

What's the secret of your success?
Teachers trust me because they've seen me recruit new members in my district and others, go through special training, and work hard at the state level. They saw I was serious about what I was doing.

Support workers finally feel there's someone who will attend to their needs and get what they want done.

Should support workers and teachers belong to the same union?
I think so. We're all here for the kids and to make sure that everyone in the Association has an equal fight. When we all belong to the same organization, no one is above anyone else, everyone's equal. And that's what makes our union great.

What do you want to accomplish?
I want to make sure people know their rights and know what's available to them as Association members. My goal is to keep everybody informed about what's going on in the NEA.

A lot of times, members pay their money and don't get any information; they don't know where to for for help. Now, if anybody needs help, they know I'm here. And if I don't know the answer, I'll tell them 'I don't know.' But at the same time, I'll tell them who does.

How's the morale of the group?
When I became president, my first goal was to get membership up, and I think we're doing a great job with that right now. We just did early enrollment, and it looks really good.

Lou Dematteis

A Lot More than a Gold Watch

San Francisco Association activists include (back row, left to right): Mary Tonas, Aracelly Martinez, Deborah Sanford-Page, David Oberweiser. Front row: Kathryn Tobie, Madeline Cabading, Rae Clayman, President Peggy Gash, and Marlene Smith.

Bargaining early retirement—sometimes just any retirement—can be a coup for school support employees.

In 1974, paraprofessionals in the San Francisco schools lost their eligibility for the city retirement system when they were removed from the city civil service to allow principals to hire more freely from the community.

But a pernicious loophole kept them formally tied to the city system, so they weren't eligible for state retirement systems either. Between 1974 and 1992, the San Francisco paras belonged to no California retirement system. They weren't even covered by Social Security.

Until United Educators of San Francisco (UESF) went to bat for them five years ago.

"First the Association negotiated with the school district to break our last link to the city civil service," explains Kathryn Tobie, a paraprofessional at the Theresa S. Mahler Children's Center. "That break required a new state law to be passed in Sacramento."

Then the San Francisco paras became eligible not only for a state retirement system but also for formal representation by UESF.

In December 1992, the local negotiated a contract that got the paras into California's third-largest public employee pension fund, the Public Agency Retirement System (PARS). Because PARS is considered a Social Security substitute, the paras are not obliged to contribute to Social Security.

"Which makes us very happy," Tobie says.

For the members of **Oregon's** Rogue River Association of Classified Employees (RRACE), the issue has been early retirement.

"The teachers unit already had an early retirement provision," says RRACE President Mary Salyer. "We just wanted to be treated equally.

"The school board seems to have appreciated our concern," Salyer con-

Good Contracts

tinues, "because we were able to negotiate an early retirement incentive into our 1994 contract. Now 20-year veterans between the ages of 55 and 64 who opt for early retirement will get $225 a month toward their medical insurance. It'll last for seven years or until they're eligible for Medicare."

Other contract news from around the country:

➤ **Arkansas'** Forrest City Educational Support Personnel Association got its first three-year contract with across-the-board increases totaling 13 percent. "We never got anything like this before," says FCESPA President Dorothea Tinsley.

Why this time? "Our members were feeling a bit aggressive because some of them—maintenance people who were also required to drive buses—were doing two jobs for the price of one. We got them small increases for their extra expertise.

"Also, we have a new superintendent who came from California, where he was accustomed to negotiating contracts," Tinsley continues. "We thought he'd think a three-year agreement wasn't unusual."

➤ In **New Jersey,** the North Hunterdon/Voorhees Regional High School Education Association bargained a year's severance pay for any employee displaced by subcontracting—after a 2-1/2 day strike.

"We had already lost the bus drivers," explains bargaining committee member Val Wojdat, a departmental secretary.

"We were afraid the custodians would be next and that the remaining secretaries—half had already been RIF'd—would be replaced by temps and voicemail."

➤ In a step toward pay equity, school nurses in Horry County, **South Carolina**—traditionally paid less than equivalent teachers—are now on a professional salary scale.

"We still get less than teachers, however," says nurse Nanette Morris, "though next year we hope to bargain 100 percent parity with teachers for RNs with college degrees, 90 percent, for those without."

Resources

➤ A brochure *Fair Pay, We're Worth It!* is available from the NEA Pay Equity Project, NEA Human and Civil Rights, 1201 16th St., N.W., Washington, DC 20036, Fax 202/822-7578.

➤ Single copies of "Briefing Paper on the Wage Gap" and "Fact Sheet on the Wage Gap" are available free from the National Committee on Pay Equity, Suite 411, 1126 16th St., N.W., Washington, DC 20036, 202/331-7343; Fax 202/331-7406.

➤ For copies of the North Hunterdon and Rogue River contract language, send a 29-cent SASE marked "severance pay" or "early retirement" to the appropriate local president: respectively Nancy Dontzin, Voorhees High School, 256 County Rd. 513, Glen Gardner, NJ 08826; or Mary Salyer, 82 Hidden Valley Lane, Rogue River, OR 97537.

➤ To pursue your own local pay equity project, contact your state Association or NEA regional office.

Pay Equity Pays

In Clover Park, Washington, Jamie Price wears three hats: special education assistant (on leave), president of Educational Support Personnel Clover Park (ESPCP), and full-time manager of the Clover Park school district's reclassification program, an NEA Pay Equity Project.

Your local works closely with the school district on this pay equity project, doesn't it?

Yes, we've institutionalized a joint Association-district approach here that I think is unique in the country. The reason is that both the administration and the Association agree that many ESP job descriptions are out-of-date. Some staff are basically operating on "other duties as assigned."

Karen Flemar

In 1991 we bargained reclassification. The next year, a joint union-management committee decided to use the NEA Pay Equity Plan to review and, if necessary, reclassify every job.

How far have you gotten with the project?

We—meaning employees, not managers—have agreed on descriptions for about 120 different jobs, had them coded by NEA's trained coders, and reclassified many of them.

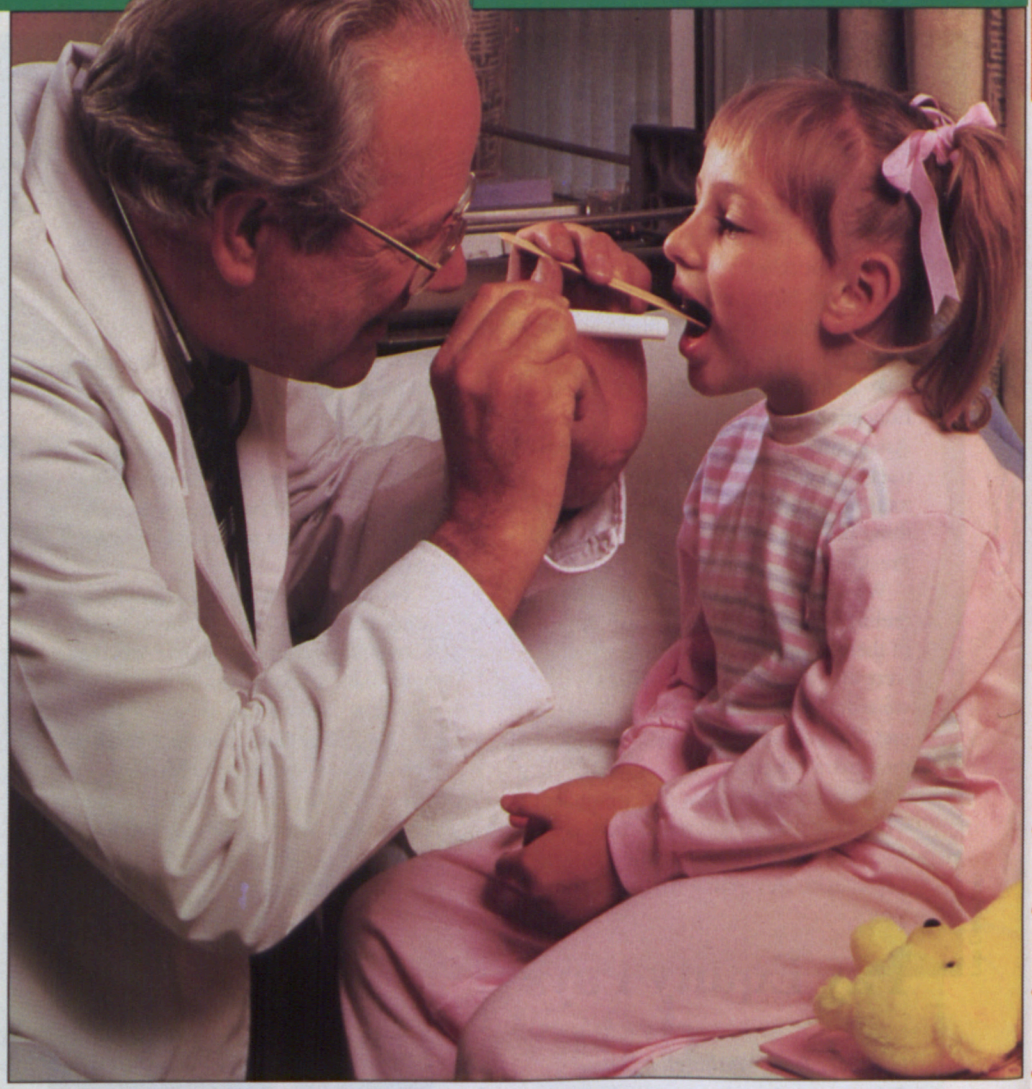
If we weren't about to start bargaining the reclassifications and attaching money to them, I would tell you how some of the positions whose higher-level responsibilities were finally recognized emerged with higher rankings.

How has the pay equity project affected membership?

We gained 100 new members—50 of them agency fee people who shifted over to membership status.

They could see that the union was really doing something for employees. A couple of them had been real anti-union people.

Toward Health Care For All



Roosevelt Hill, an office assistant at the Port Gibson High School in Claiborne County, **Mississippi,** is thrilled over his state Association's successful 1994 lobbying campaign to win fully paid health care for all full-time school workers.

But he knows it's an incomplete victory. Every day on the job, Hill sees "a whole lot" of kids who don't have any medical coverage. "We need a health plan that will help everyone—A-L-L—not just one segment of the population," he stresses.

In a way, Hill echoes NEA policy on health care reform. While pushing to extend to support workers the comprehensive benefits already won by many teachers, the Association is lobbying in Congress for a decent, affordable health care plan for *all* Americans.

This year, as Congress deliberates over the details of health reform, support staff in both Mississippi and Idaho—states that have recently passed groundbreaking health care legislation for school support employees —have some lessons to teach about grassroots lobbying.

To win passage of legislated salary improvements for education employees, including health care parity for support workers who work 20 hours or more a week, members of the Mississippi Association of Educators lobbied twice a week in Jackson, the state capital.

At one point in March, more than 1,000 MAE activists—teachers and ESP members alike—marched from a statewide delegate assembly to the capitol building. They flooded the place, prompting feuding lawmakers to break their deadlock over education bills and forge a compromise.

Hill, ESP chair for the Claiborne County Association of Educators, calls the resulting health care law a "great victory for Mississippi." Until its passage, at least 10 support workers in his school district alone couldn't afford medical insurance—which cost $234 per month for an employee and a spouse not employed by the district.

Across the country, members of the **Idaho** Education Association's ESP Task Force, chaired by teaching assistant Susan Padula, spearheaded a successful lobbying campaign for legislation to guarantee equal health coverage to certified and non-certified school employees—who work a minimum of 20 hours per week.

In a state where school support workers have no collective bargaining rights, winning an "employer mandate" to provide equal health care was a major coup.

ESP member-lobbyists were well organized. They presented letters from non-covered workers to key legislators, offered two days of committee testimony on the ESP health crisis, and packed the hearing room. Boise-area press coverage of the testimony even drew non-union school support workers to the hearings.

"These were people who didn't even know there was an Association," notes Padula, who's PAC chair of the West Shoshone Education Association. "Our message to them: The Association is fighting for you. We believe in support staff and the vital role they play in the

educational system."

Like Hill, Padula sees that children, too, need access to medical coverage. Padula's school, Pinehurst Elementary, is set in the Silver Valley mining region of northern Idaho, where unemployment is up to 23 percent.

"I see kids who don't go to the doctor or dentist when they need it," she laments.

Sadly, Richard Malizia, a school attendance officer in Union City, **New Jersey,** sees the same thing in his visits to homes of the working poor. "I see a lot of health problems that I report back to nurses."

Malizia, treasurer of the Union City Education Association and a member of the NEA Board of Directors, says, "It's important that everyone have a decent, secure health care plan.

"My concern and the Association's concern is that the benefits we currently receive should still be paid by the employer under health reform, not taxed as additional benefits."

Any nationally set benefits package, he concludes, should serve as a floor, not a ceiling. "We must still be able to negotiate for improvements."

Mississippi office assistant Roosevelt Hill and colleague Lilly Scott (standing) take a computer lesson from professor Sylvia Gist.

Andrew Kent Miller

Washington Watch

Joe DiDio

How will ESP members fare under health reform? NEA Today *posed some tough questions to Joel Packer, NEA lobbyist on health care issues.*

If reform legislation is passed, will I end up paying more for coverage?
Under health care bills that NEA supports, employers would be required to pay at least 80 percent of the average premium costs for full-time employees, and pro-rated amounts for part-timers. The one danger to our members regarding costs are proposals to subject some portion of employer-provided health care to taxation. NEA has been fighting such plans because they are plainly and simply a middle-class tax increase.

I work part-time. What if my employer cuts my hours to avoid paying me benefits?
NEA has been working to protect part-time employees. Under President Clinton's health plan and several other bills, a full-time employee is defined as someone who works at least 30 hours or more a week. Employers must pay a pro-rated share for all part-time employees, provided they work at least 10 hours per week. Under the Clinton plan, if an employer took one 40-hour-a-week position and divided it into two 20- hour jobs, it would pay more in premiums—a disincentive to cut back on hours of work.

As a public employee, will I wind up in a health plan designed for unemployed people and welfare recipients?
No. NEA supports the principle that everyone should be in one system of health care with one regional community rating—to spread out the risks and costs of health insurance as widely as possible.

If my current health plan is better than anything that comes out of Congress, will I have to settle for inferior coverage?
No. Federal legislation will establish the minimum that an employer must pay and that a health plan must contain. NEA is working to ensured that the mandated benefit package is as broad as possible. If your individual plan provides more extensive benefits than would be required by federal law, nothing will preclude those benefits from continuing.

What You Can Do

Congress is now debating the final shape of health care reform legislation. While several of the pending health bills meet NEA principles, Association members must keep up the pressure for *meaningful* reform. You can make a difference by:

➤Urging your U.S. senators and representatives to back legislation that guarantees: universal coverage, good benefits that are not taxed, quality care and meaningful cost controls, full consumer choice of doctors and plans, preventive coverage for children and extended coverage for retirees, and a Canadian-style "single-payer" insurance option for states.

➤Insisting on full coverage for education support personnel, including part-timers and those furloughed during school breaks.

➤Contacting your NEA Congressional Contact Team members and state affiliate health care coordinator for information about lobbying and educational activities.

Ginny Lee

Pattonville Support-NEA activists include (left to right) Brian Simmons, Joyce Huelzing, Debbie Kennedy, Theresa Johnston, and Charles Langelle.

Training By Staff, For Staff

When it comes to professional development, education support personnel are moving into the driver's seat. Perhaps nowhere is this take-charge spirit more in evidence than in Pattonville, **Missouri.**

"We've become empowered to manage our own professional development activities," says Theresa Johnston, secretary for the district's curriculum office and chair of the support staff professional development committee.

"When the district planned our professional development, there was always a lot of grumbling about what a waste of time it was," she says. "Now we don't get any negative comments. We're choosing our own speakers and getting quality in-service."

When Pattonville Support-NEA (PSNEA) organized three years ago, district administrators asked the new Association to manage professional development for its members.

The district provided $5,000 to cover the costs of bringing in speakers, then left the choice of those speakers up to the local Association.

So PSNEA formed a 12-member support staff development committee, each member representing an ESP job category (maintenance workers, bus drivers, secretaries, etc.).

The committee spent most of its funds on a professional development day in February. All 160 support workers heard a keynote speaker address self-esteem issues, then workers went to sessions organized by job specialty.

Maintenance workers and custodians attended a session on safety guidelines. Secretaries got updated on computer technology. And food service workers went to a session on nutrition.

"At last, we got the kind of training

Don Marquis

In the Loop

Washington Education Association Vice-President for ESP Tom Kammerzell is a custodian and maintenance worker at Jennings Elementary School in Colfax. Kammerzell closely followed the progress of House Bill 1209, which provides a big boost in staff development money for school employees across the state.

What exactly does the new law mean for education support personnel?
It means staff development is not just for teachers anymore. It requires that ESP be involved in planning staff development, and it provides $40 million for the 1994-95 school year for planning and carrying out staff development.

Once schools have the money, who will decide how to spend it?
Each school can use the money for staff development as staff see fit. One school might want to provide funds for technology, while another might fund staff development in discipline. It's up to the building-level employees to decide, so the approach dovetails with a school's move to site-based decision making.

Who at the school determines what constitutes professional development?
Specific participants at each school building must develop a grant proposal for providing staff development and planning. To get the money, each of the following people must sign off on the grant application: a certificated employee, an education support employee, a parent, a community member, and an administrator. No one person has more weight than another in signing off on the plan. We'll all have equal representation.

How To...

Illinois secretary and local Association President Barbara Hart offers the following tips for having a successful staff development day.

➤ Organize a staff development committee. Appoint about a dozen members who can devote the time to planning and organizing the activity.

➤ Ask Association members—through a survey or in a meeting—what kind of inservice sessions they would like.

➤ Make a list of speakers or appropriate people who can lead sessions. Check out possible speakers within the school district or at local colleges and government offices. Don't forget to look at the experts within your own membership.

➤ Reserve the school building where the activity will be held. Arrange to have a large hall for the opening speaker.

➤ List possible workshop topics, and ask Association members to indicate which ones they're interested in. Drop any sessions that have little member interest. Provide advance copies of the final schedule to members.

that people wanted," says Johnston. "For once, the bus drivers got to choose the topics of their session, so they were satisfied for the first time in years. Everyone was satisfied, in fact."

But that's not all. In June, the committee organized a one-day mini-conference with one-and-a-half hour sessions on decision making, conflict resolution, time management, and stress reduction.

And enough money was left over to pay for privately run, half-day workshops for a small group of support workers on topics ranging from communication to leadership skills.

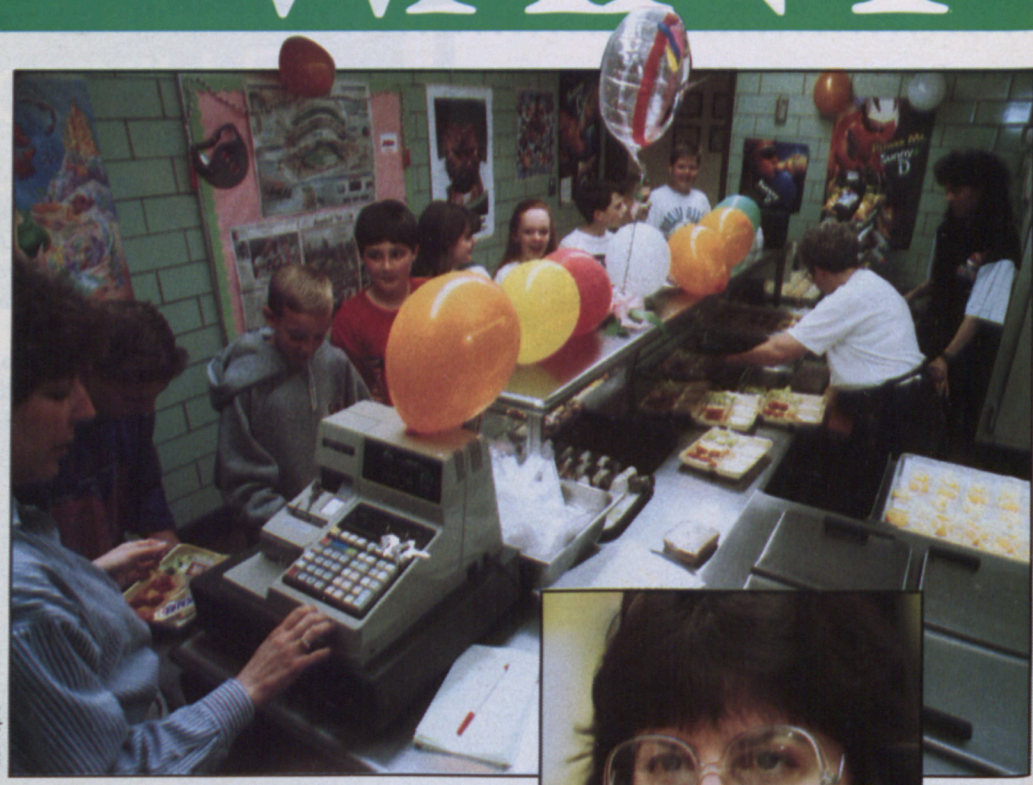
➤ Education support employees in Palos Hills, **Illinois** also earned the right to control their own professional development activities. Barbara Hart, president of the District 230 Classified Personnel Association, convinced the administration that support workers should plan their own activities.

So, on their one in-service day a year, Association members attended seven mini-courses, each directed to a different occupation.

The courses covered desktop publishing, health and safety, car care, CPR, calligraphy, nutrition and fitness, financial planning, and more.

"The one-and-a-half-hour sessions were the right length of time to hold people's interest, and the variety kept everyone involved," reports Barbara Hart, a Stagg High School secretary. "It's the same format we use for our Association's ESP conference, so it's a proven success."

Recipe for Success



Paul Tople

Take one group of cafeteria workers, one contract, and Association unity. Add a touch of ingenuity, and what can you get? A district without subcontracting.

This spring, the Brunswick (Ohio) Support Personnel Association (BSPA) bargained a contract giving cafeteria workers full control of the district's 10 school kitchens. The twist: if the kitchens run in the black after one year, the district will not subcontract any jobs for the next three years.

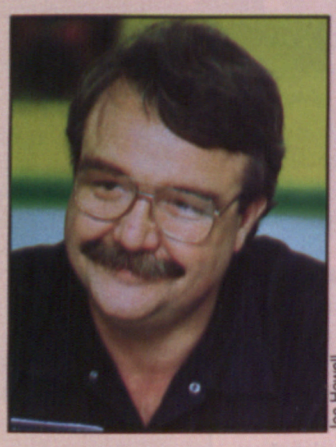
"Our 45 cafeteria worker members plan to do what ARA hasn't been able to do in the last three years—that is, save the district some money," says BSPA President Linda Nawrocki. "In the process, they'll be saving the jobs of Association colleagues in all other job classifications." The local represents 203 custodians, bus drivers, secretaries, and teacher assistants in addition to the cafeteria workers.

The move isn't without risk. The district has been in a severe financial crisis over the last five years, and the cafeteria workers will be breaking new ground by using site-based decision making to run the kitchens.

When BSPA members gathered to ratify the new contract, they discussed the risk factor with their cafeteria colleagues. "We wanted to know if they were willing to accept such heavy responsibility," Nawrocki recalls. "And in a show of unity, we told them we'd vote down the contract—even though it saved our jobs—if they felt they couldn't do it."

"When we heard that, we stood up and said, 'We can do it, we've got what it takes to be successful,'" says Shirley Urbanik, who was chosen by her peers to be food service coordinator.

Members agreed. The final vote: 118-1.



Joe Howell

"We've saved the district money and time."
—Bob Redford, Michigan custodian

Here's how colleagues around the country are waging the fight against privatization:

➤ In **Michigan,** keeping contractors out of the East Grand Rapids school district has not only saved tens of thousands of dollars, it's created a better environment for learning, say members of East Grand Rapids ESP.

"That's because we've taken over full management of the schools' maintenance program, and we're making better decisions about construction and maintenance needs," explains Association Vice President Bob Weisman.

Paul Tople

With Ohio cafeteria workers like these in charge, everyone wins, says Brunswick Support Personnel Association President Linda Nawrocki.

"We've saved the district money that can now be used for other programs, and saved our members time that they're now using to get more involved in the schools. One of our members helped build an aquarium," Weisman says, "and others have brought animals from their farms to school."

The district also saved money another way. The site-based program made so much sense, the custodial supervisor—who was against the idea any-

Public Jobs For Public Schools

way—resigned and wasn't replaced.

➤ In **Florida,** members of the Non-Instructional Personnel of Seminole County beat back attempts to subcontract custodial services by getting involved *before* decisions were made.

When the school board decided to consider subcontracting, Association leaders, together with UniServ Director Nancy Wheeler, convinced the board to look at alternatives, this time through a committee that included principals, NIPSCO members, and board members. The committee's conclusion: contracting's out.

➤ NEA members at the University of **Rhode Island** survived an 18-month campaign to privatize the campus bookstore operation. NEA Rhode Island and the Association of Clerical-Technicals/URI worked both to secure jobs and convince the college community that contracting out wasn't the answer.

Where To Get Help

➤ **The NEA Center for the Preservation of Public Education.** This center was created to counter the forces currently attacking public education by offering information and technical assistance to NEA affiliates on privatization, vouchers, and right wing attacks on public schools. To tap into the Center's resources, contact your NEA Regional office.

➤ **NEA Online**. This online computer network helps you fight subcontracting by allowing you to download files like "Evaluating Privatization Efforts." With a computer and a modem, you can trade strategies with colleagues around the nation. For your free installation kit, call 800/827-6364, ext. 3687.

➤ ***Contracting Out: Strategies for Fighting Back.*** Everything you've ever wanted to know in the fight against privatization. For copies, contact NEA Membership and Affiliates, 1201 16th St. NW, Washington, DC 20036.

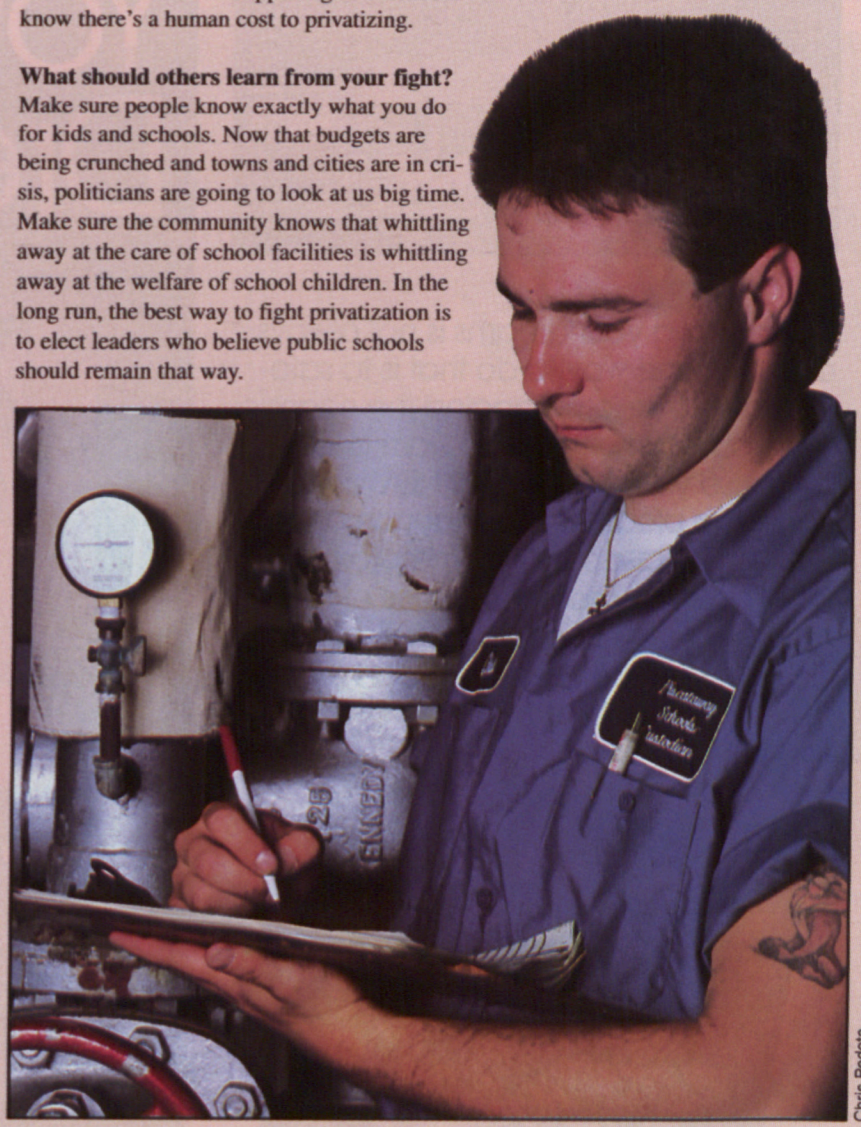
Whittling Away at Our Jobs

Why is the battle against privatization so critical? Ask Custodian Chris Kechula, vice-president of the Piscataway (New Jersey) Township Education Association. Despite a successful effort to keep Education Alternatives, Inc. from managing Piscataway schools, privatization efforts continue.

If EAI is out, what's the worry?
The problem is that our superintendent still tried to privatize the custodial services. More than once he said we were overpaid and that he could use the savings from privatization for school programs.

Was he successful?
No. We went straight to the community and told them our story. We wanted parents to be aware of what was happening. We let them know there's a human cost to privatizing.

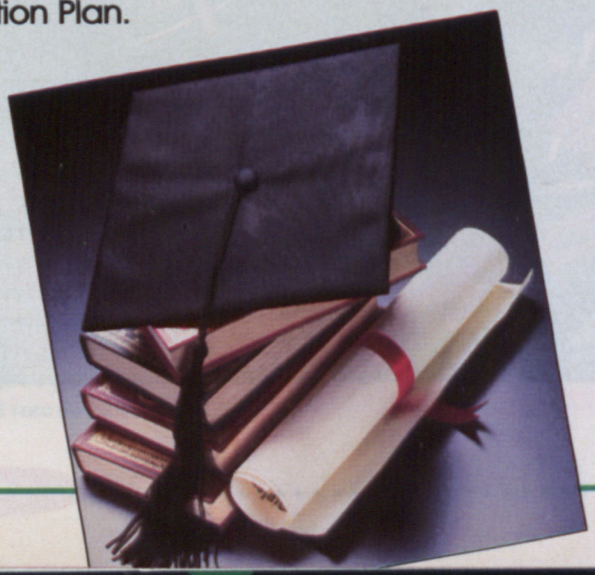
What should others learn from your fight?
Make sure people know exactly what you do for kids and schools. Now that budgets are being crunched and towns and cities are in crisis, politicians are going to look at us big time. Make sure the community knows that whittling away at the care of school facilities is whittling away at the welfare of school children. In the long run, the best way to fight privatization is to elect leaders who believe public schools should remain that way.



Chris Pedota

Protect Your Salary

Protecting your dreams is not always easy. But one way to do that is to safeguard your income against the chance that you won't be able to earn a living because you're disabled. NEA Member Benefits is pleased to announce a newly enhanced disability income protection plan that can meet the needs of ESP members. Call NEA Member Benefits, at 1-800-637-4636, for information on the new features of the NEA Income Protection Plan.



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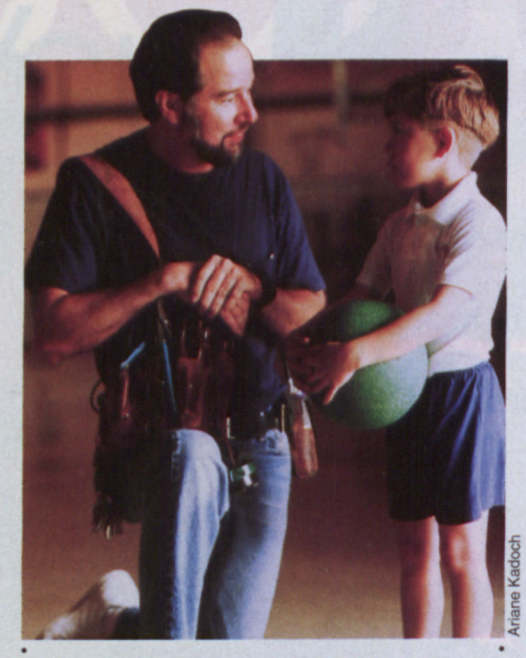
WHY WE'RE PROUD

Washington groundskeeper Don Szolomayer plants more than flowers. He plants ideas, too.

Karen Flemer

WHY WE'RE PROUD

IN LOUISIANA
Wiring a Collective Victory



Ariane Kadoch

Electrician Eddie Middleton wired the computer network that runs to all 17 schools in St. Bernard Parish. "My son's into computers big time, too," he says.

Eddie Middleton sat patiently at the banquet table with his camera ready, waiting to snap a picture of the Support Person of the Year at the NEA's ESP National Conference in Albuquerque.

He was stunned when all eyes turned to him as his name was announced as this year's honoree. "Eddie Middleton," said NEA President Keith Geiger, "is an example of what NEA is all about."

That was in April, and Middleton is still puzzling over just why everyone's made such a fuss.

Sure, he was instrumental in the two-year battle to bring collective bargaining to school support workers in St. Bernard Parish. Middleton led the way, getting signature cards and serving as chief negotiator. In February, ESP members ratified their first contract.

And sure, he's devoted to his work as a school electrician and locksmith. For the past 15 years, he's done everything from creating a wiring system for the new movie studio at Chalmotte High School to extracting little fingers caught in desks.

"I like the variety," says Middleton. "And I like being around the kids. They find everything you do fascinating."

Middleton, now the first president of his local Association, says he and other ESP members also "like the idea of belonging to a professional association, except we call it a union. When people are together for a common goal, it's a union." Next year, teachers and support workers in St. Bernard Parish will bargain as a wall-to-wall unit.

So why the fuss? "People remember me," Middleton says, "because of what we as a union have accomplished."

Cindy Shubatt

"It wasn't unusual to see Masai along the route who wanted to stop and talk," says Iowa special ed assistant Linda Hepker. "Their first question to us was always the same: 'Where's your car?' "

IN IOWA Marathon for a Cause

For eight days, Linda Hepker walked through talcum powder dust over rocky terrain. Temperatures hovered in the 90s. No shade. No rain in sight. The special ed assistant from Cedar Rapids was a long way from "nice, flat Iowa farm land."

Half way around the world, in fact. Hepker was in the Rift Valley in Tanzania last summer, walking 211 miles to raise money for Operation Bootstrap, an organization that helps fund school construction in rural African villages.

What Hepker saw there gave her a jolt. "There were 50 to 60 kids in elementary classrooms, students sitting three and four to a desk. They had no books and limited paper." In many villages, there were no schools at all.

Still, she was impressed by the "open, friendly" people, their efforts to make a life in the desert without water, electricity, or medical care, and their pleasure in the simple things in life.

So far, Hepker's raised $4,000 for the cause. "I've always sat back and said, 'That's terrible, but there isn't anything I can do,' " she says. "This showed me that one person can make a difference, no matter how small."

● IN NEW MEXICO

Persistence Pays Off

Eva Gomez is a computer lab technician—and a great organizer. Her talent surfaced when she started working to implement New Mexico's new collective bargaining law on behalf of her local, the Roswell Education Association (REA-NEA).

The New Mexico bargaining law passed in 1993 through the efforts of NEA-New Mexico members like Gomez and members of other unions. School boards are now required to engage in formal collective bargaining with school staff. No more optional agreements to "discuss" board policy.

To represent workers at the bargaining table, a union must get at least 60 percent of the employee vote in each job category. Gomez was persistent in getting out the ESP vote for REA-NEA.

"I talked a lady out of her sick bed at five minutes to six," she admits. "The polls closed at 6 p.m., and she lived a block away." Her tenacity paid off.

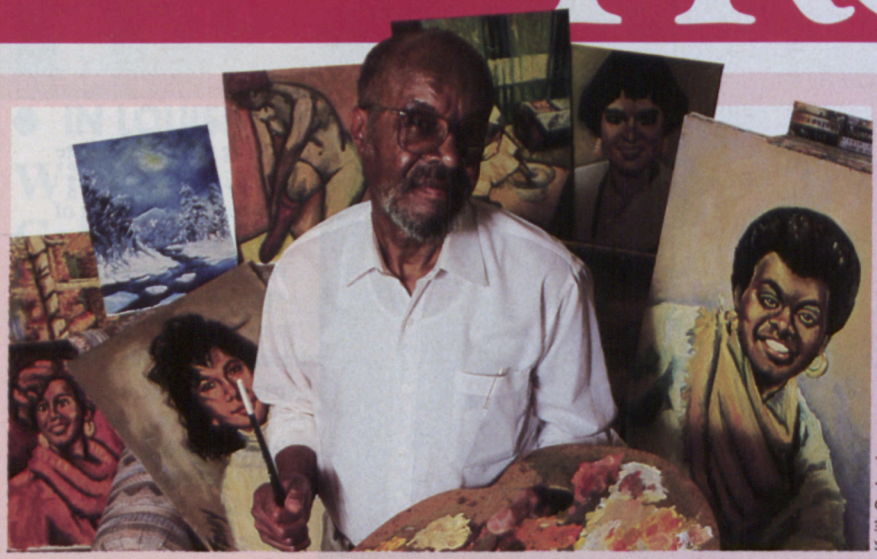
"Support workers were intimidated by administrators," Gomez explains, "but we got 62 percent of their vote." REA-NEA also won the teacher vote.

"When I believe in something, I say so whole-heartedly," Gomez explains. "I think lots of people signed up just so I'd stop talking to them!"

When she's not organizing, Eva Gomez helps students like Robert Contreras, a first grader at Pecos Elementary.

Mike Pettit

WHY WE'RE PROUD



Keith Srakocic

Recently retired custodian Townsell Thomas is in good company as he sits among a collection of his portraits.

● IN PENNSYLVANIA

Passion for Painting

Pennsylvania custodian Townsell Thomas has a passion for painting, but it's not classroom walls that call out to him. It's canvas.

Before taking a job as a custodian in the Aliquippa schools in 1976, Thomas worked in a steel mill, in an airport, in a kitchen, and in the Army. All those years, his leisure time hobby as an artist kept him going.

"I never cared what job I did as long as I could paint," says Thomas, who routinely loses himself in portraits, landscapes, and seascapes.

"I can spend a whole day on a canvas. It's a way of relaxing and forgetting my problems."

Thomas, who retired in May, graduated from Aliquippa High School in the late 1930s and went to a Pittsburgh art school for four years.

But his hopes of getting a job as an artist soon faded. "At that time," he explains, "if you were Black, there wasn't work in the art field."

Instead, Thomas found solace in his devotion to children. "Kids are full of freshness. They're so eager to learn."

To spark their interest, Thomas occasionally gave a buck or two to kids who got good grades. More memorable, however, are the portraits he painted of kids, then gave away as gifts.

"I love the kids. If you can save a few of them," he says, "you've probably helped."

● IN NEW JERSEY

Candy's Dandy

On the boardwalk—that's where she'll be.

Every day after school and all day during the summer, look for Kathryn Thompson, a library aide at Ocean City's Intermediate School, at Steel's Fudge Shop . . . on the boardwalk, of course.

For the past 16 years, Thompson has moonlighted as manager of the popular candy store. A fudge aficionado herself, Thompson's struggled to stop nibbling at the profits.

"After all this time," admits the vanilla-nut lover, "I'm still tempted by the candy. It's all so good."

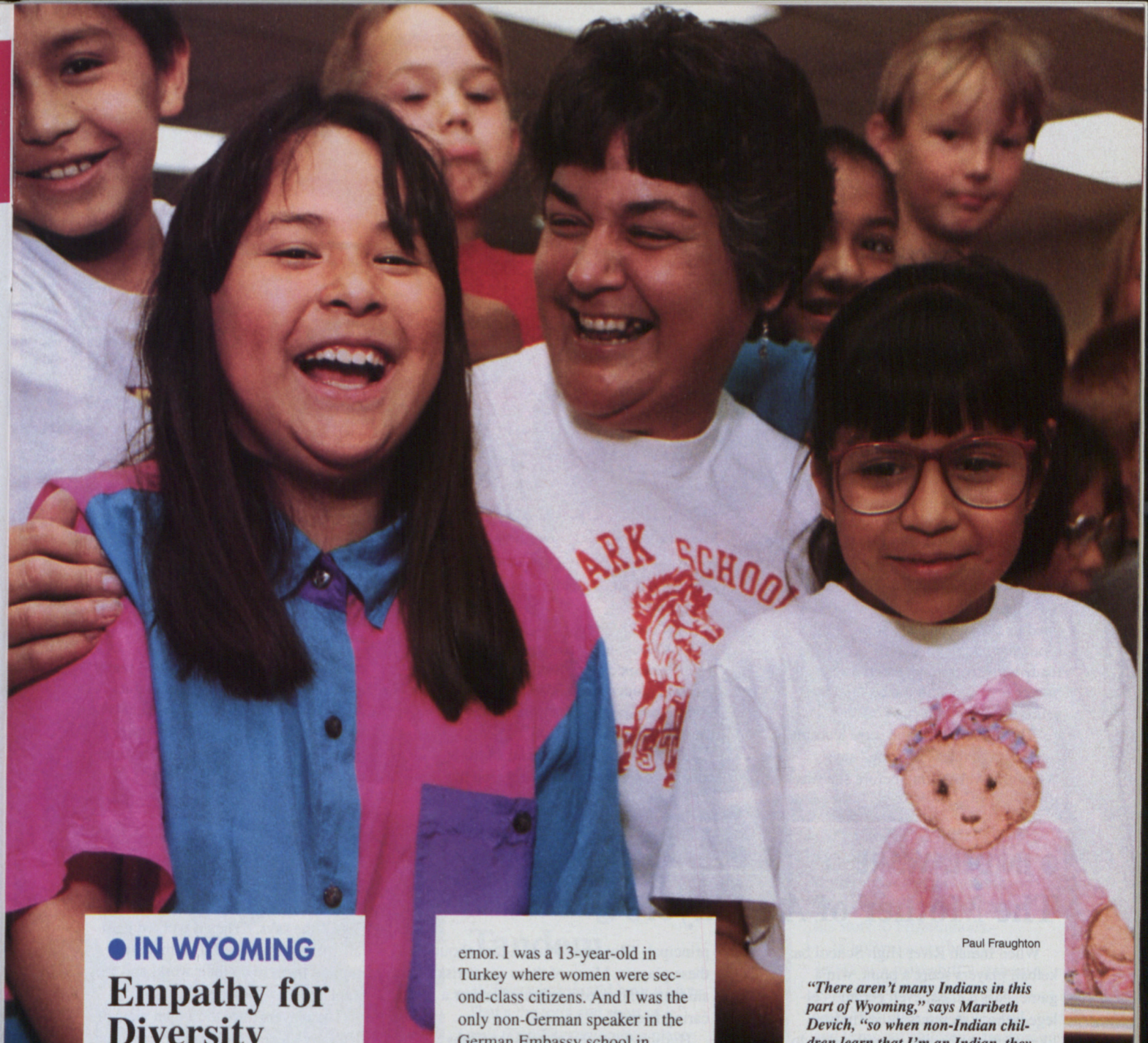
To counter the temptation, Thompson's daughter tacked up notes showing the calorie count in each piece of fudge. Store employees also keep carrot and celery sticks in the back to provide munching alternatives.

Michael P. Ein

There was no extra fat in Kathryn Thompson's budget—so 16 years ago, the mother of four starting working at Steele's Fudge Shop to supplement her income as a library aide.

During the school year, Thompson logs nearly 80 hours a week at her two jobs. During the summer, she works 80-hour weeks at the fudge store alone.

"I like to stay busy," she says. "I do a little of everything at the shop. I hire, fire, order candies, draw up the payroll, and, of course, sell fudge."



Paul Fraughton

● IN WYOMING

Empathy for Diversity

Maribeth Devich understands what it's like to be "different."

Devich, a media aide at Clark Elementary School in Evanston, Wyoming and a building rep for the Evanston Education Association, is also a Native American, a Wisconsin Winnebago, who lived all over the world.

"I was an Air Force brat," Devich explains. "I spent five years in Montgomery, Alabama when George Wallace was governor. I was a 13-year-old in Turkey where women were second-class citizens. And I was the only non-German speaker in the German Embassy school in Ankara.

"My background gives me an insight into the feelings of culturally different kids today because of what I went through in terms of discrimination—which was outright discrimination when I was a child, not the lack of awareness that plagues the culturally different today," Devich says.

"Kids' self-esteem suffers because of stereotyped images that need to be dispelled," Devich says.

"There aren't many Indians in this part of Wyoming," says Maribeth Devich, "so when non-Indian children learn that I'm an Indian, they sometimes think I live in a tepee."

To those who ask how, Devich says look around. "I think a wealth of information that's available on cultural diversity isn't being used."

Children's picture books, for example. "Two that have touched me are *I Hate English*, about a Vietnamese girl who has come to the United States, and *Everybody Loves Cooked Rice*, which is about all the different ways people cook rice."

WHY WE'RE PROUD

● IN FLORIDA

New Route for Bus Safety

Bus driver Jeanette Wilcox's drive to educate students on bus safety started in low gear. While serving as the president of the Escambia Education Support Personnel Association, she was invited to visit a kindergarten class. "Bus operators aren't often invited to the classroom," Wilcox says, so she decided to make the most of it.

Wilcox gave each child a name tag in the shape of a school bus. Then she lined up the students at "stops" in the room and had them "board" as she made her way around, teaching the proper way to act on the bus and the safest ways to get on and off.

"The kids loved it and were learning safety tips at the same time," says Wilcox. It wasn't long before she was flooded with requests for classroom appearances.

The result: "Stop, Look & Listen," EESPA's bus safety program. A crew of 10 drivers specially trained to teach elementary students has taken the 45-minute program to every elementary school in the district.

ESP, teachers, parents, and administrators worked together to develop the curriculum—bringing newfound recognition for Wilcox and her colleagues. And a 1993-94 NEA Urban Grant—the first awarded to an ESP unit—made it possible for drivers to get release time to teach during the school day.

Bruce Graner

Escambia's bus safety team, from left to right: Ronetta Allen, Catherine Wood, Jeanette Wilcox, Jean Lowery, Pat Hohaus, and Belinda Brown.

● IN DELAWARE

The Mother of All Players

When Indian River High School basketball players score a point, win a game, pass a class, even get into college, school secretary Julie Hudson likes to think she had something to do with it.

And, in nearly every case, she has.

Call Hudson the ultimate team player. She attends practices, helps lead the team booster club, and counsels players when they're struggling at home or at school.

"I love basketball," explains Hudson, secretary to the school's vice principal. "But most of all, I care about these players. Many of them are at-risk students who need a helping hand or a caring friend."

Hudson helps the players land jobs and fill out college admission forms and scholarship applications. "Last year, all of our seniors went on to college," she says. "They'd worked hard all year. They knew I'd be there to remind them to do their work, and they kept at it."

The players have their own view of Hudson's team contribution. Last year, when the coach handed out team jackets, the players gave one to Hudson. Hers has the word "Mom" embroidered over the heart.

Gary Emeigh

Whether they're on or off the court, these high school basketball players can count on school secretary and Indian River Education Association member Julie Hudson for support.

Plant engineer Glen Fitzsimmons teaches a group of neighborhood kids a few things about bike maintenance. A member of the Eagle Point Education Association, Fitzsimmons routinely fixes up old bikes and gives them to kids who aren't likely to get new ones.

Bill McClain

● IN OREGON

Working in Tandem

"Every kid should have a bike. That's the long and short of it," says Glen Fitzsimmons, a plant engineer in Eagle Point who's trying to make it so.

Over the past five years, Fitzsimmons has repaired and given away more than 500 bikes to kids whose families don't have the cash to plunk down on new ones.

Fitzsimmons fashions many of the bikes from parts salvaged from the city dump. Others are discards that folks who've learned about his hobby leave in his carport. Still others are donations from folks who want to help—like the retiring bicycle dealer in northern California who gave the entire contents of his store to Fitzsimmons.

In his two-story barn that serves as a makeshift warehouse, Fitzsimmons studiously repairs each bike, adds a coat of paint, and turns out children's treasures by the dozens.

The repair work comes easy to Fitzsimmons. "I've been a mechanic since I was a young boy," he says. He got his experience on bikes in the years he helped his youngest son—now an adult—race bikes.

"Fix-it" Fitzsimmons can—and does—teach as well. In a minicourse offered after school, Fitzsimmons teaches kids and parents alike how to repair everything from flat tires to faulty brakes.

WHY WE'RE PROUD

● IN NEW HAMPSHIRE Walls that Welcome

Peter Carvelli

Kitchen manager Terri Wakefield stands in front of the eight-foot square funky food train students painted to illustrate the major food groups.

Creativity is a main ingredient in Terri Wakefield's work day. As kitchen manager for Kingswood Regional Middle School and High School, she routinely whips up several dozen extra meals at the last minute. And when staffers call in sick, she figures out a way to get the work done.

When the nine-year kitchen veteran decided to redecorate the cafeteria—no surprise—she came up with a creative solution.

"I don't like clinical white," Wakefield says. "So I got permission from the principal to ask the Art Club to paint a mural."

At Wakefield's suggestion, seven middle school students armed with paint brushes spent four to five weeks after school giving the major food groups a new look.

"I was very impressed with what they came up with," Wakefield says. "It's lively and colorful—and it makes the cafeteria a much friendlier place to be."

● IN NEVADA

Up in Gaile's Bucket

When armed with a boom attached to a crane, Gaile Gemmer is a power lifter. "I get to lift trees, air conditioning units, even huge cement pylons," she says.

For the past 12 years, Gemmer has been the Clark County, Nevada school district's only crane boom operator —and she loves it.

"It's great. Two jibs—or extensions—increase the length of the boom from 66 to 120 feet," she says. "And I can lift up to 500 pounds in an attached bucket—that's maybe two men and a couple of light fixtures."

Gemmer's bucket has its share of cargo. Electricians board to repair the lights on the football field. Mechanics go up to install equipment.

While some may think it's a tad unusual for a woman to be a crane operator, Gemmer doesn't let that get in her way. Years ago, she was the district's first permanent full-time female grounds worker.

"I've always like running any type of heavy equipment," she says, "and I learn machinery easily. I guess I have a natural inclination."

It's up, up, and away for Clark County Education Support Employees Association member Gaile Gemmer.

Jim Decker

Mike Spinelli

Instructional assistant Ann Rugtiv lends her artistic talents to preschoolers in Bella Vista.

● **IN CALIFORNIA**

Write Stuff

Not many children at the Bella Vista Child Development Center can give their parents elaborate gifts for the holidays. But Ann Rugtiv brings a touch of class to the children's handmade presents with the art of calligraphy.

Rugtiv, who works mornings and evenings at the center, often adds elegant script to the gifts or cards the children make for their parents.

"They stand and smile while I'm doing it and ask, 'What's that?'" says Rugtiv, an instructional assistant at the center in Oakland for the past 19 years.

Rugtiv taught herself calligraphy 12 years ago after meeting a teacher who was practicing the art with ease. "I liked it so much that I went out and bought a set of calligraphy pens."

Rugtiv also devotes her talent to creating invitations, programs, and diplomas for the center's kindergarten "graduation." The ceremony, which the center puts on for children going into first grade, is complete with caps and gowns and all the pomp and circumstance of its high school equivalent.

While she does bring pizzazz to the projects, Rugtiv said the real creativity comes from the children. "They decorate the cards. I just do the writing," Rugtiv explains. "They like to do things for themselves."

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1. I am now physically able to perform all the duties of my occupation, and I am working in full compliance with the terms of my contract. (This requirement not applicable to Student, Retired or Active members who have been involuntarily terminated by a school board as a result of a reduction in force.) ☐ True ☐ False

2. During the last five years, I have never had, been treated for or been diagnosed by a doctor or other licensed practitioner as having any known condition of the heart or other circulatory disorder; cancer; tumor; diabetes; or immune system disorder or blood disorder (such as lupus, human immunodeficiency virus [HIV] infection, acquired immunodeficiency syndrome [AIDS] or AIDS-related complex [ARC]). In addition, during the last five months I have not been confined in a hospital or other institution due to illness for more than five days. ☐ True ☐ False

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The Accidental Death & Dismemberment coverage does not cover loss that occurs more than 90 days after an accident. (Time limitations are not applicable in Pennsylvania.) It does not cover any loss resulting from war (including undeclared war and armed aggression), suicide or attempted suicide, bodily or mental infirmity or disease, an infection other than a pyogenic infection of an accidental cut or wound, or travel on any aircraft aboard which you are giving or receiving training or have any duties.

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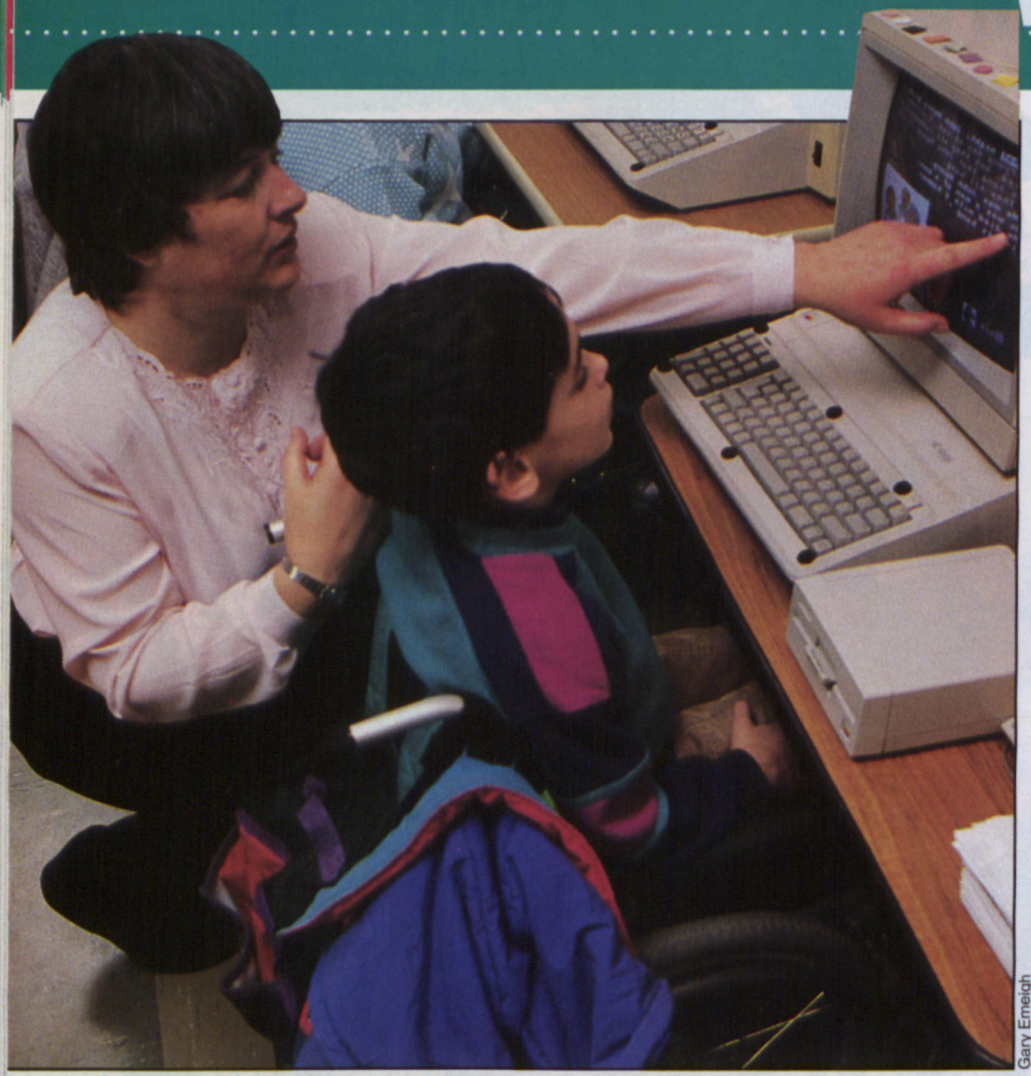
WHAT WE DO

Wisconsin bus driver and mechanic Bob Semrow and his colleagues are ready to hit the road.

Richard Meyer



Gary Emeigh

Delaware paraprofessional Barbara Morris spends some one-on-one time with Christopher McLaughlin.

The 'Inclusion' Challenge

Inclusion is coming. More districts around the country are supporting the movement to bring physically challenged students into regular education settings—but those involved in making inclusion work have their doubts.

Delaware para Barbara Morris, for one, is deeply concerned. Morris works with quadriplegic kids, victims of cerebral palsy, and others who are severely handicapped. Last year, her students were moved into regular classrooms in Colwyck Elementary in New Castle.

After one year in an inclusive setting, Morris says the kids have suffered both academically and socially.

"I have a definite problem with administrators putting students in a classroom situation when the students are bound to lose independence or can't communicate," Morris says. "I find it difficult to see how administrators see some kids as viable inclusion students."

There are logistical and staffing problems at the new school that make things even tougher for Morris' students. A few examples:

➤ Some students require special communication technology. Few teachers have time for the one-on-one attention this technology requires. If qualified staffers aren't around, students can't participate in lessons at all.

➤ There isn't enough staff to take children to rest rooms. Morris says at least one of her students who might have been toilet trained no longer has that freedom.

➤ Diapers must be disposed of in rest room trash cans, but those are emptied only at night.

➤ The eating facility for special needs students is adjacent to their changing facility.

The real tragedy, Morris says, is that the district "has made no attempt to make these facilities adequate."

Not all schools have pushed every disabled child into regular classes, but concerns about the safety of challenged students' remain.

Iona Holloway, a paraprofessional from LaPlace, **Louisiana** "gets the willies" whenever she sees one of her students with a serious medical disability mainstreamed. She supports inclusion in principle but says, "It's not always possible for every child."

Holloway, who works at LaPlace Elementary School, worries that other students might hurt the child, or that a qualified staffer might not be around in an emergency.

The biggest problem for Cedar Rapids, **Iowa** para Sunny Story in making inclusion work at Erskine Elementary School is communication among staff.

"When paras work with one teacher, it's pretty routine," she says. "But when we work with a variety of teachers, we aren't always told what's going on. That leads to some confusion in class."

Still, many paras thinks inclusion is worth all the confusion, potential danger, and possible academic costs.

Gail Severy, a special education aide in Merrimac, **New Hampshire,** says inclusion works wonders when districts provide proper training and when teachers and paras receive administrative support.

"I can really see the difference in people who are exposed to educationally disabled students," she says. "They're just more comfortable with people who are different. It's a real learning experience for both regular and disabled students."

Diversity Makes a Difference

When the state School Quality Review Team visited Belle Sherman Elementary School in Ithaca, New York, staffers were excited. But when paraprofessional Sandi Washington took one look at the team, her excitement faded.

"Here we were, a heavily multicultural school of Blacks, Asians, and whites being reviewed by a team with no diversity at all," recalls Washington.

"I wondered how our students would relate to this team, and how this team would fully understand the issues we grapple with as a multi-ethnic school. I also noticed they didn't have any support staff on the team."

Washington voiced her concerns to the team and the state board of education. They not only agreed that her issues were legitimate, they asked her to join up.

Washington accepted. This year, as the team's first African American and first support worker, Washington will visit schools across the state.

"Once a month, we spend a couple of days at a particular site," she explains. "We review the quality of the school's environment through interviews with students, parents, teachers. We ask about teaching practices, parental and student involvement, and curriculum. We talk about teacher and student morale. We then ask them how their school can be better.

"We also observe classes," Washington adds. "The team takes a look at the curriculum and determine whether the school is meeting the needs of all of its children.

"We then submit our report, with our recommendations for any improvements, to the board of education. And, no doubt about it, these reports are taken very seriously."

Tim McKinney

Tim McKinney

Paraprofessional Sandi Washington works with a diverse group of kids at Belle Sherman Elementary School in Ithaca, New York.

SEEing is Believing

The student became unruly—again, but this time Margaret White, a computer aide at Bryant Elementary School in Seattle, knew what to do.

She took the student outside. When he came back a few minutes later, he behaved himself.

It wasn't magic—White used skills she picked up through the Washington state School Employee Effectiveness (SEE) program.

"I tried to understand the reason he felt the way he did," says White, who drew on her lesson on "empathy" with SEE. "It all boils down to communication," she adds.

The Washington Education Association designed SEE four years ago to help paraprofessionals hone their communication skills for the classroom and for staff relations.

"It lets people know they're not out there by themselves," says Gail Cunningham, a SEE instructor and a paraeducator at Hillcrest Special Education Center in Renton.

SEE training teaches paras how to reduce arguments among students, remain positive about student learning and behavior, solve problems with students and other staff members, use humor and nonverbal communication, and initiate change that leads to greater efficacy.

Together with teacher Barbara Walton, Cunningham runs the program, a 50-hour course that the two have presented all over the state. Their teamwork reflects what they try to teach—good relations all around.

New Technology Ends Thermostat 'Tug-of-War'

For Whitman Elementary School head custodian Chuck Starke, the days of running around the school building adjusting thermostats are over.

Whitman opened in Wheeling, **Illinois,** two years ago with the latest in technical wizardry—computerized power systems, fire alarms, security systems, even computer-controlled air conditioning.

By connecting a building's temperature controls to a single computer, Starke can manipulate the environment of the building, or even a single room, with a simple keystroke.

"No more tug-of-war with the thermostat," Starke explains. By wiring individual rooms, the computers can customize temperatures to meet individual teachers' tastes. All a teacher has to do to change the temperature is have the custodian call the computer operator.

On-screen illustrations allow Starke to diagnose mechanical problems at a glance. "It makes the job a lot easier," Starke says. "I just walk in the boiler room and can tell what's wrong anywhere in the building."

"We not only can tell if there is a fire, we know which room it's in," says John Senny, director of operations of Wheeling School District No. 21. "Before, we just knew the alarm went off somewhere."

The most sophisticated of the new technology, called direct digital control (DDC) systems, can prevent school-wide breakdowns in environment control, notes Blade Hill, head custodian at Belvidere Junior High School in Belvidere, Illinois.

"If one heat pump breaks down, the rest of them keep going. You can isolate problems to one room," Blade says. "Before, if the heater went down, the whole system was down."

Computer control is also energy efficient, saving thousands of dollars in energy costs. Senny estimates that after accounting for federal and state grants they receive for having the technology, the school system saves about $100,000 in energy costs each year.

Energy bills in Las Cruces, **New Mexico,** have stayed constant with the system, even though electricity demand has gone up, says John Zarzecki, an energy management systems operation technician.

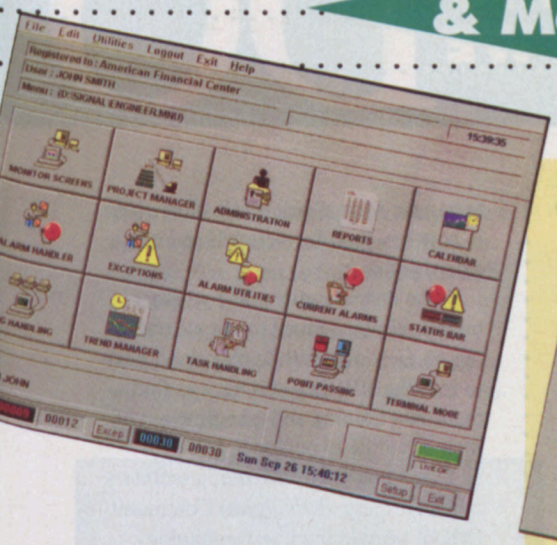
Unlike people, computers work 24 hours a day. Whitman's computer has an automatic paging system to alert custodians to building problems—such as burst pipes—even when they happen at night.

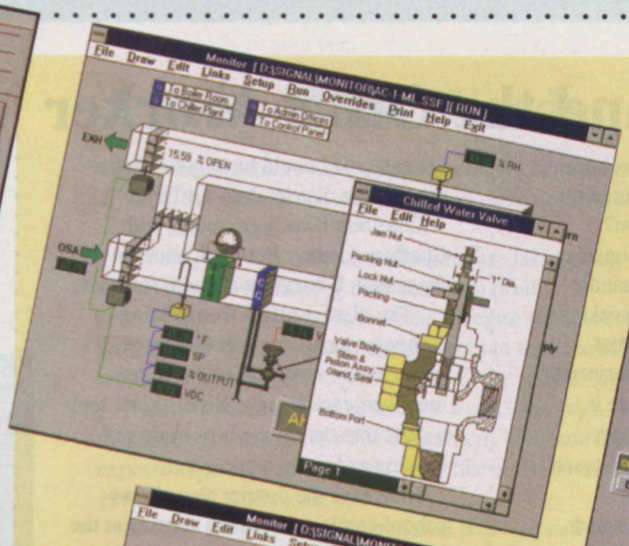
Although DDC technology can do many things for a school building, it can't substitute for a hard-working employee.

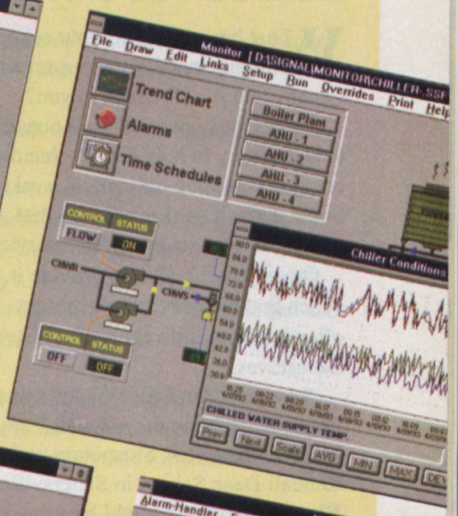
"The computers are not out to replace you; they're out there to help you," says Lalo Garcia, a yard custodian at Las Cruces School District No. 2's

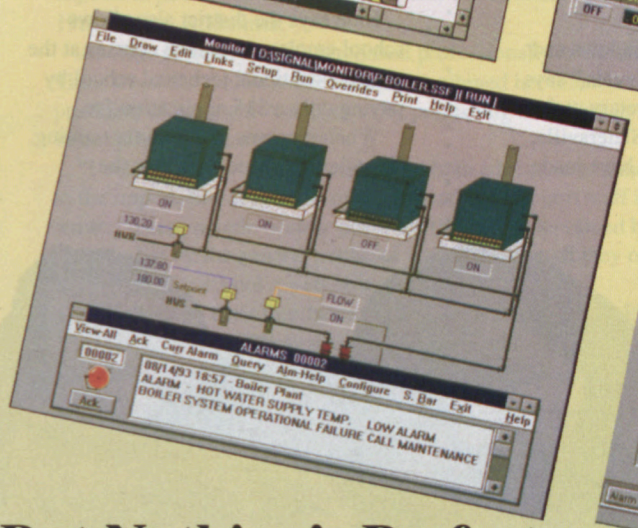
Jim Decker

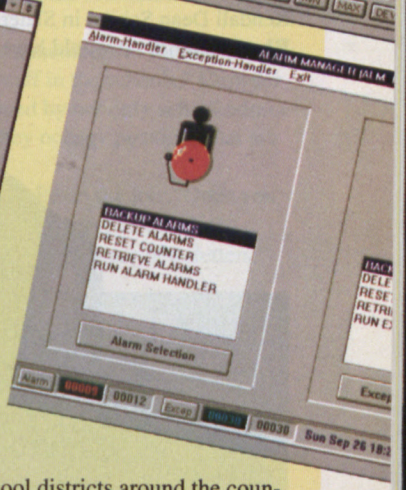
Bob Smith, head custodian at Whitney Elementary School in Las Vegas, tinkers with the new computerized equipment.





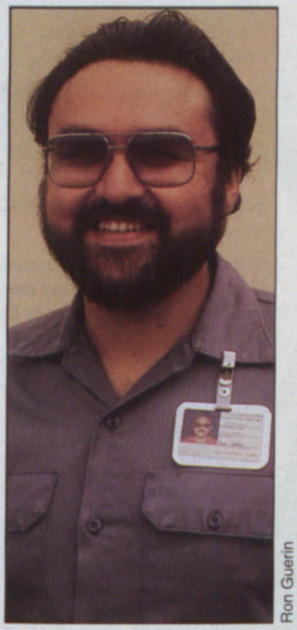






physical plant.

Custodians still have their regular duties, plus whatever maintenance the new machines require. Starke says no one has lost a job in his school over the new technology.



Ron Guerin

"The computers are not out to replace you. They're out there to help you."
—Lalo Garcia, New Mexico custodian

Custodians who haven't encountered the technology can expect to sometime in the future. Prices have fallen enough to make older systems impractical, says Zarzecki.

Las Cruces paid about $400,000 to get 90 percent of the buildings in their system on-line, but Zarzecki notes that there are lots of government incentives to buy-in to the technology.

"I can't see anyone taking on a construction project without this."

But Nothing's Perfect

Centralized environment control is catching on quickly in school districts around the country, but the technology can create problems that make the experience less than perfect for some building maintenance workers.

"Overall, it's a good system, but a lot can go wrong," says Bob Smith, head custodian at Whitney Elementary School in Las Vegas, Nevada. "We have trouble with it just like we do with any other air conditioning system," he said.

In talks with *NEA Today*, custodians listed a few typical problems.

➤ In older buildings where thermostats are still functioning, teachers adjust the temperature themselves, disrupting the computer system.

➤ In schools with heat pumps, changing the machines' filters adds several hours labor.

➤ Those expected to make computer repairs may not have had adequate training. And custodians may not have received enough training to use the computer system or even to interpret the information it provides.

Some of the problems, like teachers fiddling with the old thermostats, work themselves out over time, Smith says. Even the computer literacy problems can be addressed, says Lalo Garcia, a yard custodian in New Mexico. The computer can be programed to show switches on the screen, making it easier for the custodian to turn systems on and off.

Garcia adds, however, that special instruction from the school system is usually necessary for smooth-running operations. "Proper training is the key," he says. "It makes all the difference."

Inservice and the Office Worker

What happens when your school district installs a new computer system, and it's all Greek to you?

Across the country, there's considerable diversity in how districts handle computer training for clerical workers. Some make it a priority to see that office workers get adequate inservice.

Others don't bother to provide it. When that happens, employees are often left with little choice but to teach themselves.

"I learned Word for Windows and Lotus by studying the manuals," says Maureen Knowles, a secretary at the Kendall Dean School in Slatersville, **Rhode Island.** "It would have made life easier if I could have gotten training, but the district didn't offer it."

Charlotte Blue, a secretary with Chatham County Public Schools in Savannah, **Georgia** was more fortunate.

"The district offers free training in computer technology during work hours at our worksite, so we're not inconvenienced," says Blue. "I just took a class that taught me how to do purchasing orders on a computer."

Blue says the district also allows school employees to take courses at the nearby vocational technical school by paying only a $15 application fee.

When it comes to computer training, Knowles and Blue represent the extremes. Most districts fall somewhere in between fend-for-yourself and consider-it-done.

Some districts give office workers tuition reimbursement to pursue training on their own. While they don't have to foot the bill, they still have to find their own training and take time out of their schedule to pursue it.

That's how Sharon Tozer, a secretary at the Hesperia **(Michigan)** Community School learned the latest technology.

"We got training in WordPerfect right at our school in a five-week, two-hour session after work," says Tozer. "We put in our own time, but we didn't have to go across town to class, and it fit in at the end of the day."

The same's true for **Iowa** office worker Julie Canfield, who works at Southeastern Community College in

Vyto Starnkas

Woodstock (Vermont) Elementary School secretary Leigh Snell says her district "is supportive when it comes to learning new programs. We're getting Word for Windows soon. I'm certain that either the district is going to provide training, or we'll get tuition reimbursement to do it on our own."

West Burlington. Canfield recently took a three-week WordPerfect course right on campus. She plans to follow that up with a course in Lotus 1-2-3.

"The college provides tuition reimbursement for any course we take, and we're right on campus, so it makes it convenient," she says.

John Carrington

Georgia secretary Charlotte Blue has the best deal: free computer training during work hours at her worksite.

Conquering Clutter

Overwhelmed with paper? Join the club. Here are some tips from Sue McMillin, president of the Fairfax, Virginia-based *With Time to Spare*.

1. *Remove* files from your desk or file drawer one at a time.
2. *Sort* files into one of three stacks: action, support, archival.
3. *Eliminate* by purging any files that are too big.
4. *Assign* action files and support files to a drawer nearest you. Place archival files outside your office or further away from your desk.

A Way With Words

A lot of secretaries have a special knack when it comes to putting words on paper. On the job, it's not unusual to find them drafting correspondence and writing school newsletters.

Off the job, some of your colleagues are taking their talents to newspaper and magazine editors—and seeing their names in print.

Just three years ago, Eagle Point, **Oregon** school secretary Carole Nielson began writing everything from historical pieces to travel articles and restaurant profiles for national and regional magazines like *Country, Wild West,* and *Oregon Hunter.*

"I write a minimum of 30 hours a week," she says. "I love it because I meet fascinating people and get to write about them." Nielson has published 27 articles, and she expects to publish 18 more this year. She's also doing research for a biography of a 19th century goldminer.

Another secretary who's published professionally is Colonial Middle School's Tince Crowder (below). She recently combined her talent for writing with her role as president of her local Association by publishing an article in the Norristown, **Pennsylvania** *Times Herald.*

"I believe that it is important to alert both educators and members of the community to the importance of the role of the educational support staff in the schools," Crowder wrote. "These people occupy positions that are undervalued by not only school administrators but by the general public as well, even though they occupy positions that are essential to the school's well-being."

In addition to their free-lance writing, both secretaries write on the job. "Once you do a good job on a writing project, the job is yours for life," observes Crowder. "That's how I got responsibility for writing both the school and library newsletters."

Stacy Edmonds

No More Fat-Filled Lunches

Tired of research reports that cite fat as a major ingredient in American school lunches, the Clinton Administration has laid down the law.

A few months ago, the Department of Agriculture announced a plan to reduce the fat content of school lunches, the biggest change in the government program since its inception in 1946.

The requirements call for limiting the proportion of calories from fat in school lunches to 30 percent and saturated fat to 10 percent. Schools will also have to reduce sodium and cholesterol levels and increase the fiber content of school lunches.

What prompted these restrictions? A sobering government study that found school meals laden with fat and twice the recommended amount of salt. About 38 percent of the calories in the standard school lunch comes from fat, the study found.

The new guidelines will change the way cafeterias operate. Under the new plan, schools will no longer follow the "meal pattern" method. School staff may serve whatever foods they want in whatever quantities they choose as long as they meet the lower fat requirements.

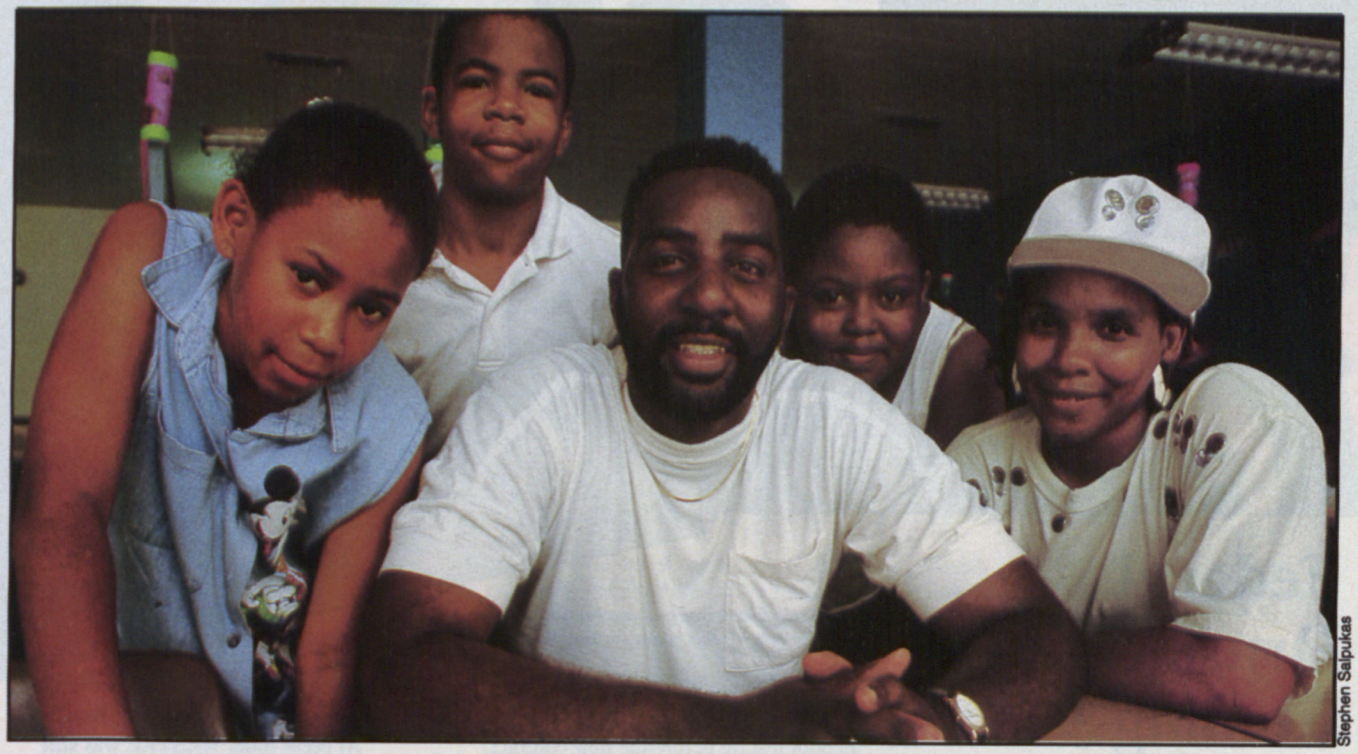
To help cafeteria workers figure out the nutritional content of meals, schools will use computers to analyze them. Those schools unable to purchase the equipment may be eligible for assistance.

The new guidelines will be enforced during the 1998-99 school year.

Massachusetts cook Charlotte Burke makes sure kids at Northeast Regional Tech in Wakefield eat plenty of fruits and vegetables.

Michael Quan

Art and Nutrition: A Prize-Winning Mix



Stephen Salpukas

Virginia cafeteria manager Lucius Alford with students (left to right) ShaVon Randolph, Dwayne Stewart, Melody Bennett, and assistant Maria Crenshaw.

Virginia cafeteria manager Lucius Alford has been helping a group of 20 Richmond-area fourth and fifth graders use art to illustrate the importance of nutrition.

In the process they've developed an art show that's pleasing not only to the eye, but to the taste buds as well.

"We combined meals the students planned with art shows designed along nutritional themes," explains Alford, a member of the Richmond Education Association.

As part of a contest sponsored by the Nutrition Advisory Council, Alford and Swansboro Model School students created fruit and vegetable displays, designed nutrition posters, planned community breakfasts, decorated local restaurants, and taught other kids what they know.

Their most creative moment? Perhaps the ice carving event. "We had a wonderful time—the kids loved it."

As for the contest, the kids won. They were crowned the Nutrition Advisory Council's state champions, beating out students at 200 other Virginia schools.

At press time, Alford's students were competing in the Council's national finals in St. Louis.

Fight That Fat

How do you fight fat in school meals?

"We've cut down the fat by using ground turkey and low fat cheese. We also make sure our meals offer plenty of salads and vegetables."

— Charlotte Burke, Massachusetts

"We bake our fries instead of deep frying them. We also offer more vegetables than before and even a vegetarian dish or two. It's not always easy to convince our kids to like all of the meals that are better for them, but they're learning."

— Kathy Koronik, Delaware

"Our school has become more conscious of fat, too. That's why we've switched to low fat milk and cheese. The kids seem to like that just fine."

— Lucius Alford, Virginia

"For years we've been working to lower fat in our menus. We switched to ground turkey for our tacos and burgers; we use oil that's lower in saturated fat; and we developed new recipes that call for less salt, sugar, and margarine."

— Brenda Hobbs, Maryland

Wisconsin bus driver and mechanic Bob Semrow gets his bus ready for the road.

Federal Drug Regs: Coming Soon

At a meeting of school transportation officials held in rural **Wisconsin** last fall, Wautoma driver and mechanic Bob Semrow heard for the first time that he and his colleagues would be subject to federally mandated drug and alcohol testing beginning January 1, 1996.

Under the new rules, school districts and school bus contractors—and every other employer of drivers, mechanics, and supervisors required to hold the Commercial Driver's License—must set up stringent alcohol and drug testing procedures. (See box, "What's in the Regulations?")

Because the Wautoma district has fewer than 50 covered employees, the Wautoma Area School Transportation-Related Employees (WASTRE) has a year longer than large school districts to bargain safeguards for Semrow and 14 other local members.

"Last winter, when we started to draw up proposals for a new two-year contract," Semrow recalls, "I remembered we'd be involved in the drug and alcohol testing before the new contract was out."

"We need to know what our rights are," explains bargaining chair Lee Bendixen, "especially if somebody has a bad reading."

And, Bendixen adds, "we need to bargain all possible employee protections. For example, we need language that holds a job open for a recovered employee who remains drug-free."

At press time, WASTRE was still bargaining. "If we don't have time to negotiate everything in this year's contract," Bendixen says, "we'll try to include a 'conceptual proposal'—a statement that says the Association wants to be a party to anything the district does in terms of testing procedures *before* the district does it."

What's in the Regulations?

The Federal Highway Administration's new regulations mandate five types of alcohol and drug testing:

- pre-employment
- post-accident
- on reasonable suspicion of impairment
- random
- return-to-duty and follow-up.

To screen for alcohol misuse, the regs say that blood alcohol levels will be read by a Breathalyzer. For drug misuse, urine will be tested for evidence of marijuana, cocaine, amphetamines, opiates (including heroin), and phencyclidine (PCP).

If either the drug or the alcohol screening test indicates substance misuse, a confirmation test will be required before any punitive action is taken.

Testing procedures must be in place by January 1, 1995 for employers with 50 or more covered employees, and by January 1, 1996 for all others.

What You Can Bargain

Despite the scope of the new regulations, there are contractual protections you can—and should—negotiate. Here are some issues not covered by the regs you may be able to bargain:

➤ **Testing procedures.** Will employees get written or oral notice of upcoming testing? Who determines the training managers get to help them identify "impairment" due to drug or alcohol misuse? What is the scope of any employee education program? Who picks the breath alcohol technician? Who picks the medical review officer? Who pays?

➤ **Consequences of a positive test.** Is rehabilitation required? Who pays? Does the employee retain his or her job? Who picks the substance abuse professional? Who pays? Is a second opinion allowed? Is the employee placed in rehabilitation? Can the employee be transferred to a non-safety-sensitive position? What access does your Association have to employee test reports?

—NEA Government Relations

Resources

➤ *Drug and Alcohol Testing for School Bus Drivers.* 15 minute videotape. Stock no. A050-10141. To order, send a $15 check payable to NEA to NEA Video Library, P.O. Box 509, West Haven, CT 06516.

➤ *Alcohol & Drug Rules: An Overview.* U.S. DOT, Fed. Highway Admin., 1994. 16 pp. Available from FHWA, Office of Motor Carrier Standards, Washington, DC 20590.

➤ Copies of the alcohol and drug rules can be obtained from libraries that subscribe to the *Federal Register.*

Life After Bus Driving

Twenty-five years ago, Ruthann Minner drove a school bus in Kent County, Delaware.

In the years since, Minner has been elected a Delaware state representative and state senator. Now she's the state's lieutenant governor.

"Driving a school bus was one of the most difficult jobs I've had," Minner recalls. "I'll take my current job any day—it's a lot easier."

Former bus driver Ruthann Minner is now Delaware's Lt. Governor.

A Tale of Guns 'n' Buses

Guns sold out of the bus barn? An ammo delivery made by school bus? These are among the allegations that Judson Whitten and Dan Bell, Cherokee County, Alabama ESPO members, made to the Alabama state ethics committee a year ago.

The two bus mechanics blew the whistle on their boss, Harold Pearson, the district's supervisor of transportation—who's also a licensed gun dealer.

They first told their school board (and later the state ethics committee) that Pearson not only sold guns from his office, but used his county car to make deliveries—once even having a county school bus deliver ammunition.

"We kept written records of the times we saw people buying guns in his office or saw him loading up his car to make deliveries," says Whitten. "I got a photo of the shells he put in a bus that was taking children home."

Whitten and Bell are looking for justice. "As far as we know, the school board didn't even reprimand him," Bell says. "In fact, what upset board members most was the photos and the notes that we showed them. They said, 'How are you fixing our buses when you're writing this down?'"

By a 5-0 vote, the ethics committee referred the case to the county district attorney. For months, nothing. Then, last June, Whitten and Bell were called before a grand jury—only to be told the statute of limitations had expired!

Judson Whitten

What if...

. . . you're on playground duty when a student has a serious accident—and the parents sue for negligence?

. . . you break up a student fight—and the students' parents charge you with assault?

. . . you provide first-aid when a school nurse isn't around—and the parents sue?

Rest easy. If you're a member of NEA, you've got insurance.

These days, there are a lot of "what if's" out there—and a lot of parents heading to court. If the unthinkable happens to you, you're protected by NEA's Educators Employment Liability policy.

NEA's insurance policy provides up to $1 million of protection from personal financial liability—and pays your legal costs, too. In criminal matters, you're covered for up to $35,000 in defense expenses.

Your coverage is worldwide and in force 24 hours a day. You're covered when you're on the job and when you're involved in school-sponsored extracurricular activities. And you're covered even if a lawsuit is filed years after the incident—as long as you were a member at the time.

Your NEA dues cover the costs of your liability insurance, so there are no additional fees to pay. With NEA's liability insurance behind you, you can do your job without worrying about what could happen if something goes wrong.

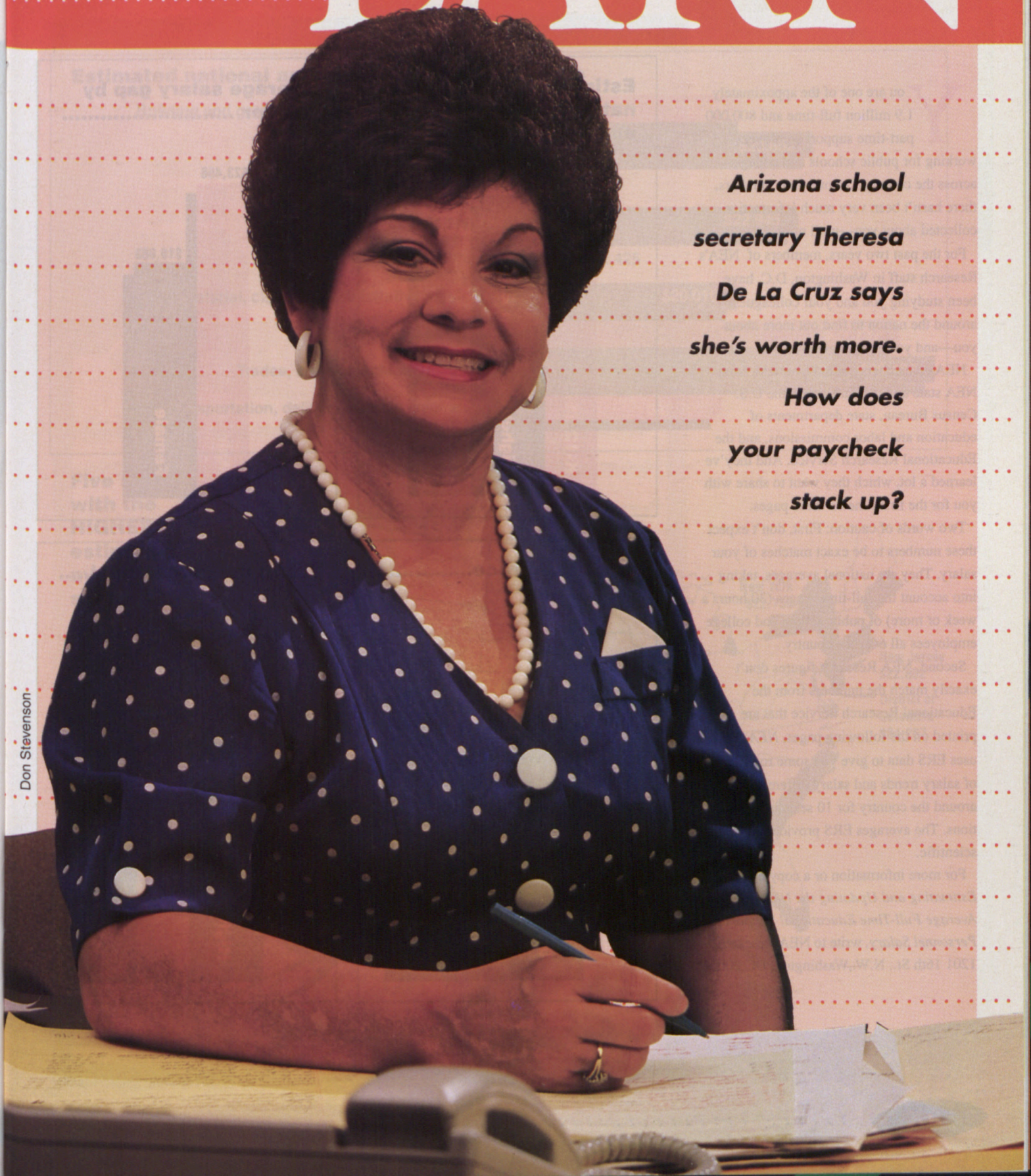
For more information about NEA's Educators Employment Liability policy, contact your UniServ representative or write to the NEA Legal Services Program, 1201 16th St., N.W., Washington, DC 20036.

One important reminder to bus drivers: NEA's insurance will protect you if you're sued for negligent supervision of students on or around the bus or for providing emergency first-aid. For situations involving the operation of your bus, you must rely on your district's insurance for coverage in case of an accident.

nea

All coverages are subject to the terms and conditions of the EEL Program insurance policy, which may vary from state to state.

EARN



Don Stevenson

Arizona school secretary Theresa De La Cruz says she's worth more. How does your paycheck stack up?

Salary Statistics: A

You are one of the appoximately 1.9 million full-time and 800,000 part-time support employees working for public schools and colleges across the country. Despite your numbers, there hasn't been very much information collected about you—until now.

For the past two years, members of NEA's Research staff in Washington, D.C. have been studying you and your colleagues around the nation to find out more about you—and your wages.

NEA researchers poured over data from NEA state and local affiliates, the U.S. Census Bureau, state departments of education and labor commissions, and the Educational Research Service. And they've learned a lot, which they want to share with you for the first time on these pages.

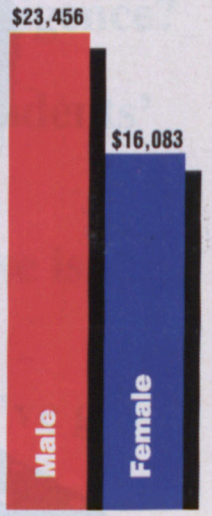
Two words of caution: First, don't expect these numbers to be exact matches of your salary. They are national averages, taking into account the full-time wages (30 hours a week or more) of public school and college employees all over the country.

Second, NEA Research figures don't exactly match the numbers from the Educational Research Service that are printed on the following pages. *NEA Today* uses ERS data to give you some rough ideas of salary trends and salary differences around the country for 10 selected occupations. The averages ERS provides are not scientific.

For more information or a copy of *Estimating and Updating the National Average Full-Time Educational Support Personnel Salary*, write to NEA Research, 1201 16th St., N.W.,Washington, DC 20036.

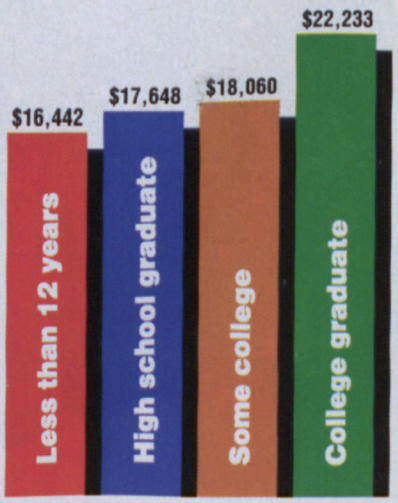
Estimated full-time national ESP salary average for

Average salary gap by gender



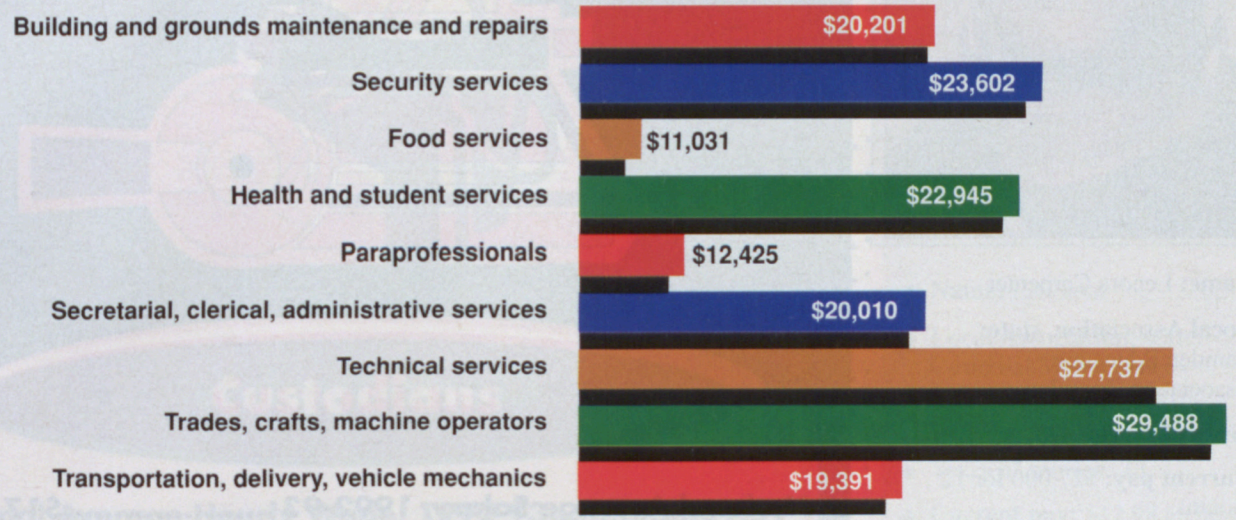
.....by race.....

.....by education level.....



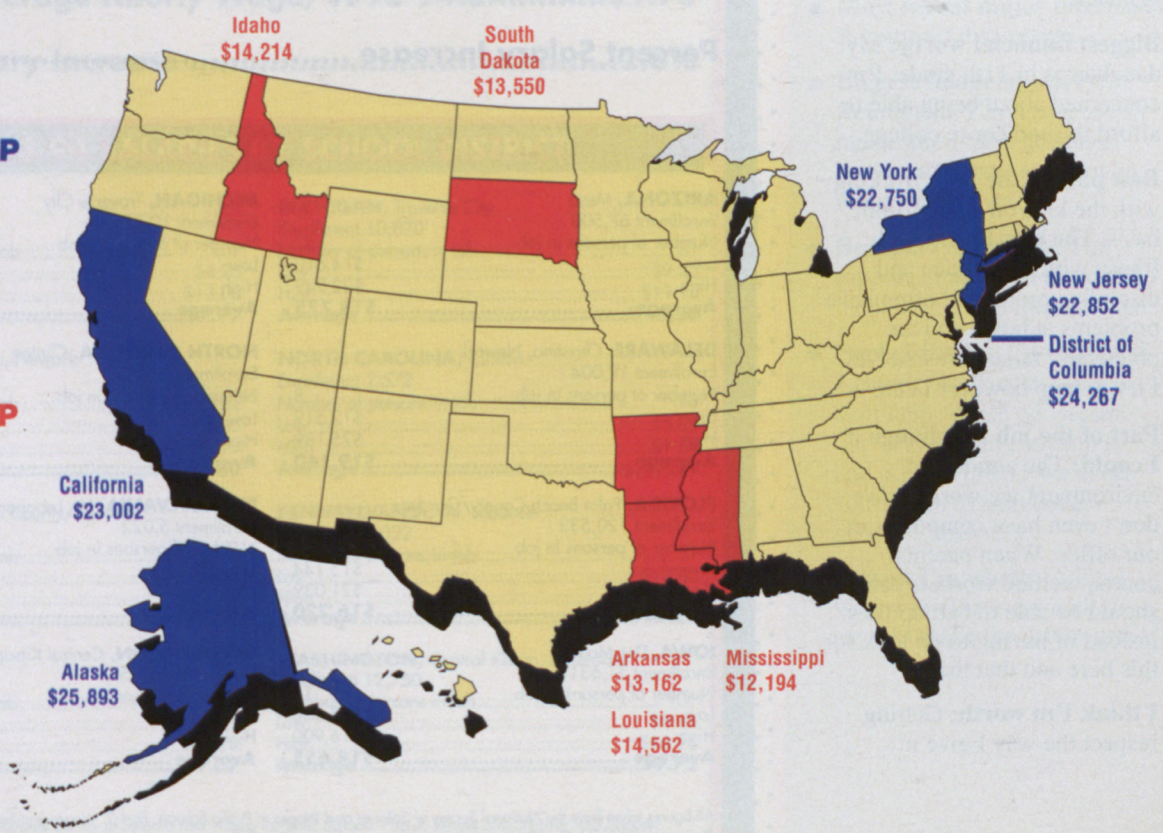
National Picture

Estimated national average salaries by job group



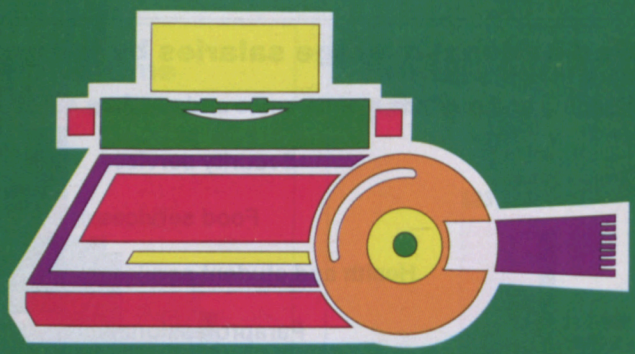
Five states with the HIGHEST estimated average ESP salaries

Five states with the LOWEST estimated average ESP salaries



- **Name:** Lenora Carpenter
- **Local Association, state:** Camden Education Association, New Jersey
- **Years of service:** 23
- **Current pay:** $27,000 for 12 months
- **Most recent major purchase:** A couch.
- **Biggest financial worry:** My daughter is in 11th grade. I'm concerned about being able to afford to send her to college.
- **Best part of the job:** Working with the kids on a one-to-one basis. The kids I work with [those with attendance and discipline problems] often have problems at home and are practically raising themselves. I try to help however I can.
- **Part of the job I'd change if I could:** The antiquated environment we work in. We don't even have computers in our office. When parents, courts, welfare workers call, we should be able to call up files, instead of having to go look for this here and that there.
- **I think I'm worth:** Getting respect the way I give it.

WHAT WE EA



Clerk-Typists

National Average Salary, 1992-93 .....$17,772

National Average Salary, 1993-94 .....$18,296

Percent Salary Increase 2.9%

1993-94 SALARIES BY SCHOOL DISTRICT

ARIZONA, Mesa
Enrollment 67,500
Number of persons in job.....42
Low.....$14,610
High.....$22,949
Average.....$18,775

DELAWARE, Christina, Newark
Enrollment 19,004
Number of persons in job.....8
Low.....$12,519
High.....$25,189
Average.....$19,140

FLORIDA, Palm Beach County/Gardens
Enrollment 120,533
Number of persons in job.....120
Low.....$13,144
High.....$21,039
Average.....$16,220

IOWA, Des Moines
Enrollment 31,631
Number of persons in job.....11
Low.....$13,650
High.....$16,900
Average.....$14,655

MICHIGAN, Traverse City
Enrollment 10,870
Number of persons in job.....5
Low.....$21,091
High.....$24,648
Average.....$22,963

NORTH CAROLINA, Clinton
Enrollment 2,572
Number of persons in job.....1
Low.....$16,457
High.....$16,457
Average.....$16,457

PENNSYLVANIA, Mt. Lebanon
Enrollment 5,022
Number of persons in job.....2
Low.....$18,600
High.....$20,550
Average.....$19,575

WASHINGTON, Central Kitsap, Silverdale
Enrollment 12,750
Number of persons in job.....2
Low.....$15,379
High.....$19,947
Average.....$17,663

All figures taken from the *National Survey of Salaries and Wages in Public Schools: Part 3, Wages and Salaries Paid Support Personnel, 1993-94.* © 1994 by Educational Research Service. Hourly wage rates and salaries presented as national averages reflect non-weighted averages of the approximately 1,000 districts that provide data reported to ERS. Appreciation is expressed to ERS for use of these data.

RN

Custodians

National Average Hourly Wage, 1992-93.....$9.51

National Average Hourly Wage, 1993-94.....$9.76

Percent Salary Increase 2.6%

1993-94 SALARIES BY SCHOOL DISTRICT

ARIZONA, Mesa
Enrollment 67,500
Number of persons in job.....439
Low.....$4.25
High.....$13.03
Average.....$7.77

DELAWARE, Christina, Newark
Enrollment 19,004
Number of persons in job.....152
Low.....$6.68
High.....$11.77
Average.....$10.80

FLORIDA, Palm Beach County/Gardens
Enrollment 120,533
Number of persons in job.....579
Low.....$6.95
High.....$11.13
Average.....$7.61

IOWA, Des Moines
Enrollment 31,631
Number of persons in job.....121
Low.....$5.22
High.....$10.72
Average.....$9.67

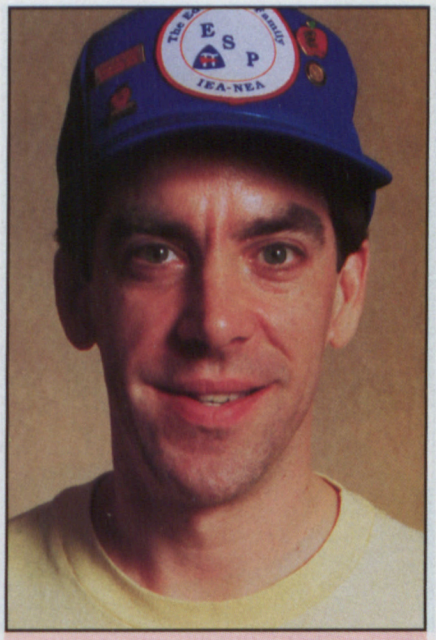
MICHIGAN, Traverse City
Enrollment 10,870
Number of persons in job.....81
Low.....$9.43
High.....$11.18
Average.....$10.56

NORTH CAROLINA, Clinton
Enrollment 2,572
Number of persons in job.....18
Low.....$5.85
High.....$9.54
Average.....$7.24

PENNSYLVANIA, Mt. Lebanon
Enrollment 5,022
Number of persons in job.....39
Low.....$12.83
High.....$12.83
Average.....$12.83

WASHINGTON, Central Kitsap, Silverdale
Enrollment 12,750
Number of persons in job.....101
Low.....$8.45
High.....$10.96
Average.....$9.72

All figures taken from the *National Survey of Salaries and Wages in Public Schools: Part 3, Wages and Salaries Paid Support Personnel, 1993-94.* © 1994 by Educational Research Service. Hourly wage rates and salaries presented as national averages reflect non-weighted averages of the approximately 1,000 districts that provide data reported to ERS. Appreciation is expressed to ERS for use of these data.



- **Name:** Pat Sloat
- **Local Association, state:** Custodial/Maintenance Workers of District #218, Illinois
- **Years of service:** 13
- **Current pay:** $12.98 an hour, 40 hours a week for 12 months
- **Most recent major purchase:** A compact disc player.
- **Biggest financial worry:** Retirement. I'm trying to make sure I have adequate health insurance and enough money to live on.
- **Best part of the job:** The rapport I have with the staff in the building and the students.
- **Part of the job I'd change if I could:** We need additional staff help. When people are out sick, we have to chip in and do their work. We need substitutes to help cover people's absences.
- **I think I'm worth:** A lot. I wear a pin that says it all. It says, "I make the difference."

- **Name:** Sarah Dunn
- **Local Association, state:** Wake County Education Support Personnel, North Carolina
- **Years of service:** 10
- **Current pay:** $8.38 an hour, 30 hours a week for 9 months
- **Most recent major purchase:** A truck.
- **Biggest financial worry:** I need a salary increase to help me buy a house.
- **Best part of the job:** Working with the kids. I just enjoy seeing them smile when they come on the bus and wave to me when they leave.
- **Part of the job I'd change if I could:** We have a problem with student discipline on the school bus, and we don't have the authority or the training to handle it.
- **I think I'm worth:** $15 an hour. I leave home at 5:30 in the morning, and my first stop is before 6 a.m.

Bus Drivers

National Average Hourly Wage, 1992-93.....$10.15

National Average Hourly Wage, 1993-94.....$10.35

Percent Salary Increase 2.0%

1993-94 SALARIES BY SCHOOL DISTRICT

ARIZONA, Mesa
Enrollment 67,500
Number of persons in job.....221
Low.....$8.10
High.....$11.65
Average.....$9.65

DELAWARE, Christina, Newark
Enrollment 19,004
Number of persons in job.....174
Low.....$9.29
High.....$11.53
Average.....$10.15

FLORIDA, Palm Beach County/Gardens
Enrollment 120,533
Number of persons in job.....564
Low.....$6.95
High.....$11.13
Average.....$10.33

IOWA, Des Moines
Enrollment 31,631
Number of persons in job.....122
Low.....$10.54
High.....$12.23
Average.....$10.88

MICHIGAN, Traverse City
Enrollment 10,870
Number of persons in job.....115
Low.....$9.90
High.....$10.67
Average.....$10.65

NORTH CAROLINA, Clinton
Enrollment 2,572
Number of persons in job.....34
Low.....$6.86
High.....$7.41
Average.....$7.22

PENNSYLVANIA, Mt. Lebanon
Enrollment 5,022
Number of persons in job.....4
Low.....$13.69
High.....$13.69
Average.....$13.69

WASHINGTON, Central Kitsap, Silverdale
Enrollment 12,750
Number of persons in job.....51
Low.....$10.60
High.....$13.63
Average.....$12.24

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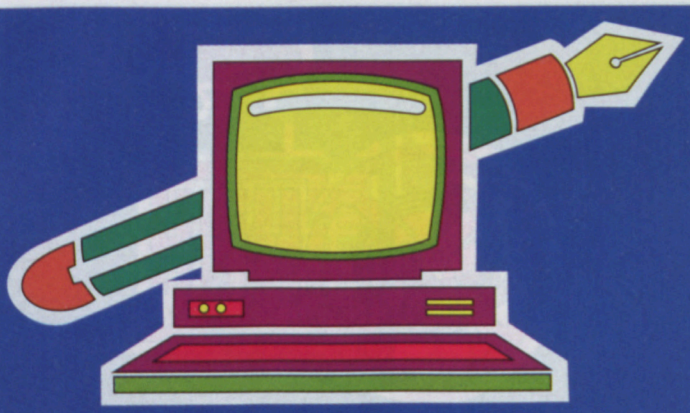


Central Office Secretaries

National Average Salary, 1992-93 .....$22,770

National Average Salary, 1993-94 .....$23,495

Percent Salary Increase 3.2%

1993-94 SALARIES BY SCHOOL DISTRICT

ARIZONA, Mesa
Enrollment 67,500
Number of persons in job.....50
Low $15,824
High 34,501
Average 22,780

DELAWARE, Christina, Newark
Enrollment 19,004
Number of persons in job.....22
Low 12,519
High 31,885
Average 26,045

FLORIDA, Palm Beach County/Gardens
Enrollment 120,533
Number of persons in job.....76
Low 16,449
High 38,474
Average 19,799

IOWA, Des Moines
Enrollment 31,631
Number of persons in job.....57
Low 14,248
High 18,824
Average 16,098

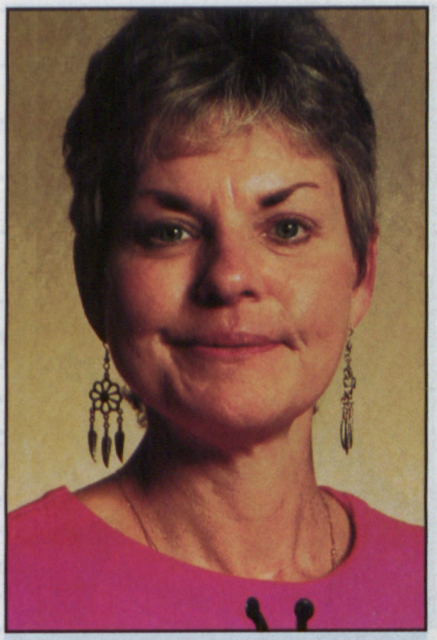
MICHIGAN, Traverse City
Enrollment 10,870
Number of persons in job 19
Low 18,075
High 26,062
Average 22,110

NORTH CAROLINA, Clinton
Enrollment 2,572
Number of persons in job.....3
Low 17,766
High 22,564
Average 19,365

PENNSYLVANIA, Mt. Lebanon
Enrollment 5,022
Number of persons in job.....11
Low 18,600
High 30,746
Average 24,309

WASHINGTON, Central Kitsap, Silverdale
Enrollment 12,750
Number of persons in job.....12
Low 17,672
High 38,402
Average 25,134

All figures taken from the *National Survey of Salaries and Wages in Public Schools: Part 3, Wages and Salaries Paid Support Personnel, 1993-94.* © 1994 by Educational Research Service. Hourly wage rates and salaries presented as national averages reflect non-weighted averages of the approximately 1,000 districts that provide data reported to ERS. Appreciation is expressed to ERS for use of these data.



- **Name:** Sandy Hoffmann
- **Local Association, state:** Northern Educational Support Team, Wisconsin
- **Years of service:** 15
- **Current pay:** $20,650 for 12 months
- **Most recent major purchase:** An old motor home. We're planning to see some of the woods we haven't seen in northern Wisconsin.
- **Biggest financial worry:** I'm afraid I'll be laid off because of budget cuts.
- **Best part of the job:** The people I work with.
- **Part of the job I'd change if I could:** The uncertainty. It may just be a matter of time before they start laying people off.
- **I think I'm worth:** Being treated like a person by the management here.

- **Name:** Sandy Yeaton
- **Local Association, state:** ACSUM—the Associated COLT Staff of the University of Maine
- **Years of service:** 17
- **Current pay:** $23,000 for 12 months
- **Most recent major purchase:** My father-in-law's car, a '91 Buick.
- **Biggest financial worry:** I have a son going to college in September, and a daughter getting married in December. I'm worried about getting through this year.
- **Best part of the job:** I like the people that I work with, and I like to pride myself on getting material to people as quickly as it comes in.
- **Part of the job I'd change if I could:** The working conditions. We're in a very old building that needs paint, carpeting, and general repair.
- **I think I'm worth:** More money. I hope that I'm an invaluable asset to the University, given my experience here and what I do.

WHAT WE EA

Library Clerks

National Average Salary, 1992-93 .....$13,311

National Average Salary, 1993-94 .....$13,809

Percent Salary Increase 3.7%

1993-94 SALARIES BY SCHOOL DISTRICT

ARIZONA, Mesa
Enrollment 67,500
Number of persons in job 28
Low.....$13,001
High.....$21,669
Average $18,364

DELAWARE, Christina, Newark
Enrollment 19,004
Number of persons in job .....ND
Low.....ND
High.....ND
Average.....ND

FLORIDA, Palm Beach County/Gardens
Enrollment 120,533
Number of persons in job 91
Low.....$9,214
High.....$16,671
Average $11,964

IOWA, Des Moines
Enrollment 31,631
Number of persons in job 6
Low.....$14,430
High.....$17,030
Average $15,816

MICHIGAN, Traverse City
Enrollment 10,870
Number of persons in job 25
Low.....$10,768
High.....$13,997
Average $12,330

NORTH CAROLINA, Clinton
Enrollment 2,572
Number of persons in job 4
Low.....$11,358
High.....$11,868
Average $11,741

PENNSYLVANIA, Mt. Lebanon
Enrollment 5,022
Number of persons in job 3
Low.....$14,450
High.....$15,789
Average $15,343

WASHINGTON, Central Kitsap, Silverdale
Enrollment 12,750
Number of persons in job 22
Low.....$11,061
High.....$14,347
Average $12,854

All figures taken from the *National Survey of Salaries and Wages in Public Schools: Part 3, Wages and Salaries Paid Support Personnel, 1993-94.* © 1994 by Educational Research Service. Hourly wage rates and salaries presented as national averages reflect non-weighted averages of the approximately 1,000 districts that provide data reported to ERS. Appreciation is expressed to ERS for use of these data.

RN

Payroll Clerks

National Average Salary, 1992-93 .....$22,605

National Average Salary, 1993-94 .....$23,275

Percent Salary Increase 3.0%

1993-94 SALARIES BY SCHOOL DISTRICT

ARIZONA, Mesa
Enrollment 67,500
Number of persons in job.....25
Low $17,305
High $25,438
Average $20,779

DELAWARE, Christina, Newark
Enrollment 19,004
Number of persons in job.....8
Low $19,930
High $30,272
Average $26,090

FLORIDA, Palm Beach County/Gardens
Enrollment 120,533
Number of persons in job.....47
Low $14,314
High $29,891
Average $17,200

IOWA, Des Moines
Enrollment 31,631
Number of persons in job.....13
Low $14,508
High $18,538
Average $16,358

MICHIGAN, Traverse City
Enrollment 10,870
Number of persons in job.....15
Low $16,702
High $26,062
Average $22,070

NORTH CAROLINA, Clinton
Enrollment 2,572
Number of persons in job.....3
Low $18,697
High $23,519
Average $21,100

PENNSYLVANIA, Mt. Lebanon
Enrollment 5,022
Number of persons in job.....3
Low $16,900
High $17,800
Average $17,200

WASHINGTON, Central Kitsap, Silverdale
Enrollment 12,750
Number of persons in job.....8
Low $19,292
High $27,009
Average $22,477

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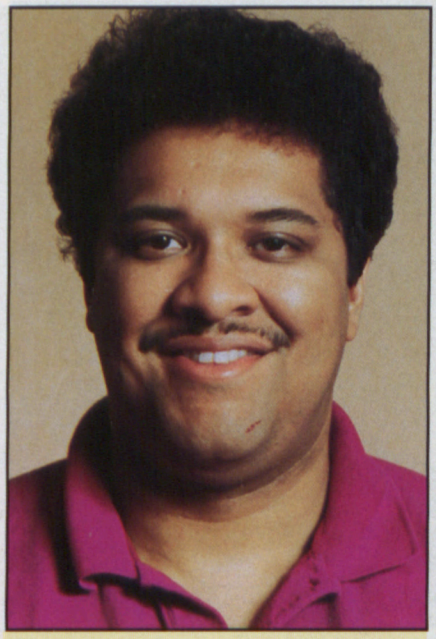

- **Name:** George Jackson
- **Local Association, state:** Farmington ESP, Michigan
- **Years of service:** 10
- **Current pay:** $31,000 for 12 months
- **Most recent major purchase:** A house, three years ago.
- **Biggest financial worry:** Privatization. I'm worried that my job will be contracted out or that I'll end up working for a subcontractor at a fraction of what I'm making now.
- **Best part of the job:** Staying in touch with just about everybody in the district.
- **Part of the job I'd change if I could:** I wish I didn't have to work under so many timelines and so much pressure.
- **I think I'm worth:** Every penny that I make. People tend to minimize what support employees do, but I think I'm worth a lot more than the public-at-large realizes.

- **Name:** Cheryl Severson
- **Local Association, state:** Sonora Elementary School Employees Association, California
- **Years of service:** 6
- **Current pay:** $9.45 an hour, 6 hours a day for 10 months
- **Most recent major purchase:** A 1969 Volkswagen Beetle.
- **Biggest financial worry:** For the last four years, we've gotten step increases only. I'm worried about both cuts in hours and wage freezes. And I'm concerned that attrition will increase work load—but not the number of hours we're paid to handle it.
- **Best part of the job:** Working with the children. It's amazing the discoveries that kindergarteners make every single day.
- **Part of the job I'd change if I could:** I'd like to change the public's perception of public schools. I'd like the public to be directly involved in the schools, to see what actually goes on here.
- **I think I'm worth:** The respect I get here. I think my wage is fair, given the community we live in.

Instructional Assistants

National Average Hourly Wage, 1992-93.....$8.31

National Average Hourly Wage, 1993-94.....$8.50

Percent Salary Increase 2.3%

1993-94 SALARIES BY SCHOOL DISTRICT

ARIZONA, Mesa
Enrollment 67,500
Number of persons in job.....679
Low.....$6.06
High.....$7.58
Average.....$7.12

DELAWARE, Christina, Newark
Enrollment 19,004
Number of persons in job.....220
Low.....$7.69
High.....$12.14
Average.....$9.95

FLORIDA, Palm Beach County/Gardens
Enrollment 120,533
Number of persons in job.....414
Low.....$6.33
High.....$10.59
Average.....$8.62

IOWA, Des Moines
Enrollment 31,631
Number of persons in job.....238
Low.....$6.64
High.....$8.72
Average.....$7.19

MICHIGAN, Traverse City
Enrollment 10,870
Number of persons in job.....105
Low.....$7.44
High.....$11.09
Average.....$8.42

NORTH CAROLINA, Clinton
Enrollment 2,572
Number of persons in job.....48
Low.....$6.99
High.....$9.59
Average.....ND

PENNSYLVANIA, Mt. Lebanon
Enrollment 5,022
Number of persons in job.....6
Low.....$9.24
High.....$10.34
Average.....$10.05

WASHINGTON, Central Kitsap, Silverdale
Enrollment 12,750
Number of persons in job.....183
Low.....$7.95
High.....$11.67
Average.....$10.04

All figures taken from the *National Survey of Salaries and Wages in Public Schools: Part 3, Wages and Salaries Paid Support Personnel, 1993-94.* © 1994 by Educational Research Service. Hourly wage rates and salaries presented as national averages reflect non-weighted averages of the approximately 1,000 districts that provide data reported to ERS. Appreciation is expressed to ERS for use of these data.

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Noninstructional Assistants

National Average Hourly Wage, 1992-93.....$7.82

National Average Hourly Wage, 1993-94.....$8.14

Percent Salary Increase 4.1%

1993-94 SALARIES BY SCHOOL DISTRICT

ARIZONA, Mesa
Enrollment 67,500
Number of persons in job 378
Low.....$5.23
High.....$7.50
Average $6.48

DELAWARE, Christina, Newark
Enrollment 19,004
Number of persons in job 65
Low.....$6.29
High.....$9.99
Average $8.10

FLORIDA, Palm Beach County/Gardens
Enrollment 120,533
Number of persons in job 1,195
Low.....$5.41
High.....$8.59
Average $6.93

IOWA, Des Moines
Enrollment 31,631
Number of persons in job 165
Low.....$6.13
High.....$7.80
Average $6.53

MICHIGAN, Traverse City
Enrollment 10,870
Number of persons in job 3
Low.....$8.49
High.....$8.76
Average $8.58

NORTH CAROLINA, Clinton
Enrollment 2,572
Number of persons in job 5
Low.....$6.99
High.....$7.59
Average $7.30

PENNSYLVANIA, Mt. Lebanon
Enrollment 5,022
Number of persons in job 11
Low.....$9.76
High.....$11.08
Average $10.29

WASHINGTON, Central Kitsap, Silverdale
Enrollment 12,750
Number of persons in job 22
Low.....$7.42
High.....$9.57
Average $8.26

All figures taken from the *National Survey of Salaries and Wages in Public Schools: Part 3, Wages and Salaries Paid Support Personnel, 1993-94.* © 1994 by Educational Research Service. Hourly wage rates and salaries presented as national averages reflect non-weighted averages of the approximately 1,000 districts that provide data reported to ERS. Appreciation is expressed to ERS for use of these data.

- **Name:** Sharon Marshall
- **Local Association, state:** Lincoln Education Association, Louisiana
- **Years of service:** 21
- **Current pay:** $776 per month for full-time work
- **Most recent major purchase:** Living room furniture.
- **Biggest financial worry:** College for four children.
- **Best part of the job:** The children. When I get that occasional hug or smile, it's all worthwhile. Children are what we're here for.
- **Part of the job I'd change if I could:** The salary. You have to enjoy what you're doing to stay as long as some of us have and not be paid for it.
- **I think I'm worth:** A million dollars.

- **Name:** Theresa De La Cruz
- **Local Association, state:** Phoenix Elementary #1 ESP/EA, Arizona
- **Years of service:** 24
- **Current pay:** $22,870 for 10.5 months
- **Most recent major purchase:** A stove and a refrigerator.
- **Biggest financial worry:** I'm very blessed.
- **Best part of the job:** Relating to the students and the parents in the school office. I really enjoy seeing the students at my inner-city school succeed.
- **Part of the job I'd change if I could:** The salary. I think the pay should be better considering everything we do—from counseling kids, to nursing, to handling everything that comes through the door.
- **I think I'm worth:** At least $28,000. New technology and site-based management have added to secretaries' workloads and responsibilities. We should be compensated for it.

Building Secretaries

National Average Salary, 1992-93 .....$18,104

National Average Salary, 1993-94 .....$18,692

Percent Salary Increase 3.2%

1993-94 SALARIES BY SCHOOL DISTRICT

ARIZONA, Mesa
Enrollment 67,500
Number of persons in job.....79
Low.....$16,848
High.....$26,998
Average.....$22,298

DELAWARE, Christina, Newark
Enrollment 19,004
Number of persons in job.....62
Low.....$12,519
High.....$29,148
Average.....$23,705

FLORIDA, Palm Beach County/Gardens
Enrollment 120,533
Number of persons in job.....387
Low.....$12,720
High.....$34,517
Average.....$17,797

IOWA, Des Moines
Enrollment 31,631
Number of persons in job.....79
Low.....$13,988
High.....$19,084
Average.....$17,279

MICHIGAN, Traverse City
Enrollment 10,870
Number of persons in job.....30
Low.....$13,689
High.....$18,205
Average.....$15,955

NORTH CAROLINA, Clinton
Enrollment 2,572
Number of persons in job.....10
Low.....$12,459
High.....$17,766
Average.....$15,010

PENNSYLVANIA, Mt. Lebanon
Enrollment 5,022
Number of persons in job.....19
Low.....$16,900
High.....$23,960
Average.....$18,923

WASHINGTON, Central Kitsap, Silverdale
Enrollment 12,750
Number of persons in job.....5
Low.....$12,974
High.....$22,978
Average.....$15,816

All figures taken from the *National Survey of Salaries and Wages in Public Schools: Part 3, Wages and Salaries Paid Support Personnel, 1993-94.* © 1994 by Educational Research Service. Hourly wage rates and salaries presented as national averages reflect non-weighted averages of the approximately 1,000 districts that provide data reported to ERS. Appreciation is expressed to ERS for use of these data.

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Cafeteria Workers

National Average Hourly Wage, 1992-93.....$7.56

National Average Hourly Wage, 1993-94.....$7.72

Percent Salary Increase 2.1%

1993-94 SALARIES BY SCHOOL DISTRICT

ARIZONA, Mesa
Enrollment 67,500
Number of persons in job.....498
Low.....$4.28
High.....$10.43
Average.....$6.47

DELAWARE, Christina, Newark
Enrollment 19,004
Number of persons in job.....140
Low.....$5.83
High.....$8.88
Average.....$7.23

FLORIDA, Palm Beach County/Gardens
Enrollment 120,533
Number of persons in job.....701
Low.....$6.95
High.....$11.13
Average.....$9.23

IOWA, Des Moines
Enrollment 31,631
Number of persons in job.....313
Low.....$6.15
High.....$7.67
Average.....$6.62

MICHIGAN, Traverse City
Enrollment 10,870
Number of persons in job.....77
Low.....$7.36
High.....$9.76
Average.....$8.77

NORTH CAROLINA, Clinton
Enrollment 2,572
Number of persons in job.....27
Low.....$6.25
High.....$8.72
Average.....$7.21

PENNSYLVANIA, Mt. Lebanon
Enrollment 5,022
Number of persons in job.....22
Low.....$6.77
High.....$8.37
Average.....$7.49

WASHINGTON, Central Kitsap, Silverdale
Enrollment 12,750
Number of persons in job.....73
Low.....$7.04
High.....$10.21
Average.....$8.53

All figures taken from the *National Survey of Salaries and Wages in Public Schools: Part 3, Wages and Salaries Paid Support Personnel, 1993-94.* © 1994 by Educational Research Service. Hourly wage rates and salaries presented as national averages reflect non-weighted averages of the approximately 1,000 districts that provide data reported to ERS. Appreciation is expressed to ERS for use of these data.

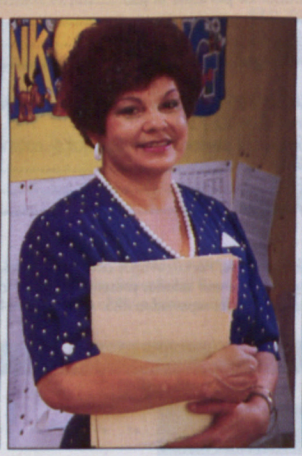
- **Name:** Debi Srail
- **Local Association, state:** University Place Classified Association, Washington
- **Years of service:** 5
- **Current pay:** $8.42 an hour, 22.5 hours a week, 180 days a year
- **Most recent major purchase:** We're in the process of buying a house.
- **Biggest financial worry:** College tuition. We have three teenagers, one going to college this fall.
- **Best part of the job:** That I get off at 1:30 in the afternoon. It really does blend with a family life. And, as the president of my local Association, I need the time to do things before and after work.
- **Part of the job I'd change if I could:** I would change the stereotype that a lot of people have about food service workers.
- **I think I'm worth:** People's consideration and treatment as an equal.

A FEW FACTS FOR YOUR FILES

Here's everything you always wanted to know about your colleagues—but were too polite to ask. The info is courtesy of NEA Research, which sent surveys last year to 500 ESP members in each of the 34 states where more than 1,000 support employees belong to NEA.

- ESP members are predominantly women. In half of the 34 states surveyed, more than 80 percent of ESP members are women. Only two states—Indiana and Nevada—have fewer than 70 percent female respondents.
- ESP members tend to be in their 40s. Median ages range from a low of 41 in Alaska to a high of 50 in Indiana and Maryland.
- At least two-thirds of the respondents in all 34 states are married.
- Median annual household income of respondents ranges from a low of $23,000 in Arkansas to a high of $45,000 in Alaska and Maryland.
- The vast majority of ESP members are at least high school graduates. In Massachusetts, 5 percent have a master's degree or more.
- In nearly all of the states surveyed, more than 90 percent of ESP members are registered to vote.
- The majority of ESP members work full-time, but large percentages in some states don't. In California, for instance, 44 percent work part-time.
- Most ESP members work in public school districts. But many ESP members—particularly in the Northeastern states of Rhode Island, Massachusetts, and Maine—work in higher education.
- Nearly all ESP members work five days a week, putting in an average of between 6.1 and 7.4 hours a day.
- Most ESP members work nine months a year. Large percentages work 12 months a year in Rhode Island, Maine, Missouri, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania.
- The average ESP member has 10 years of on-the-job experience. In five states—Colorado, Louisiana, North Carolina, Virginia, and Maryland—most ESP members have 12 to 14 years experience.
- The percentage of ESP members who have a second job ranges from a low of 10 percent in Pennsylvania to a high of 24 percent in Alaska.
- In Arkansas, Alabama, and Kentucky, 30 percent or more of those who hold two jobs work full-time at both of them.
- At $12.26 an hour, ESP members in Alaska report the highest median hourly wage. At the other extreme, ESP members in Georgia, Alabama, and Louisiana report a median hourly wage of less than $6 an hour.
- Most ESP members say that a written job description exists for their positions. Only in Alabama do more than a third (35 percent) say there is no job description for their position.
- In 20 states, 70 percent or more of those responding are covered by a collective bargaining agreement. In six states—Illinois, Iowa, Michigan, Ohio, Rhode Island, and Washington—90 percent are covered by contracts.
- Those responding to the survey have been NEA members for an average of three to six years. Two exceptions: New Jersey (7 years) and Alabama (9 years).

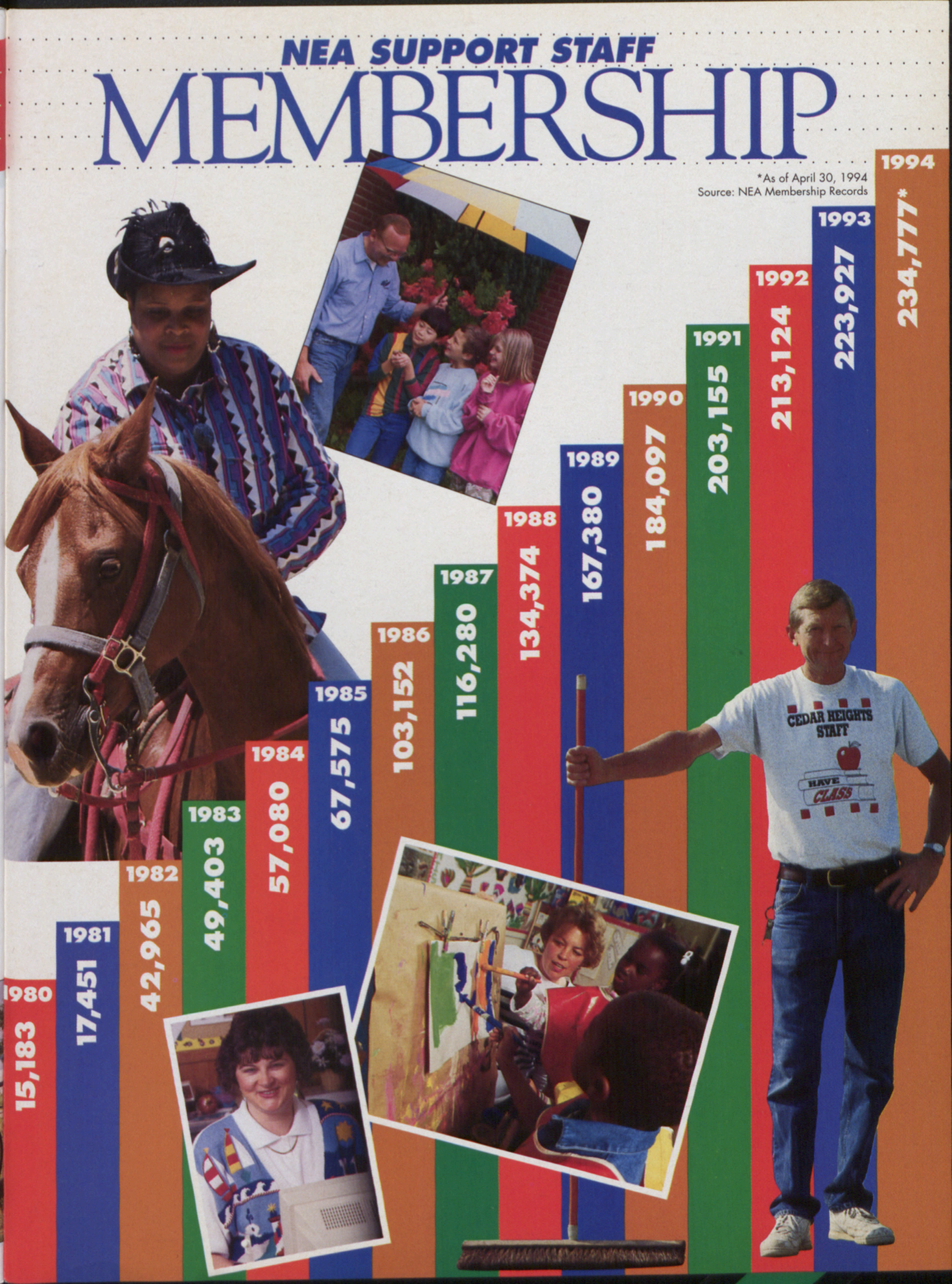
Source: ***NEA Support Personnel Membership Study by State, 1993***. For more details or a copy of the report, write to NEA Research, 1201 16th St., N.W., Washington, DC 20036.



NEA SUPPORT STAFF

MEMBERSHIP

*As of April 30, 1994
Source: NEA Membership Records



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